

Redcar and Cleveland Youth and Community Service

Redcar and Cleveland Children's Services Authority Area

Age group: All

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Introduction

1. Redcar and Cleveland's Youth and Community Service is located within the Adult and Children's Services department. The principal youth and community officer is supported by three senior managers who manage geographic areas and quality assurance, curriculum and outdoor education. There are 37 full-time equivalent staff comprising 12 full-time managers and youth workers, 11 project development workers, 101 part-time youth support workers and eight administrative staff. In addition there are 36 volunteers. There are around 13,500 young people aged 13 to 19 in Redcar and Cleveland; in 2007-08, 17% participated regularly in youth work activities and 26% had some contact with the service.

2. The youth and community service budget for 2008-09 is £1.242 million. In 2007-08 the service obtained additional income of £95,000 from other council budgets for collaborative initiatives such as developing provision alongside extended schools. The service provided around £35,000 to the voluntary and community sector through grant aid and other contract arrangements. The Youth Opportunity Fund made available £108,021 and the Youth Capital Fund £93,429.

3. This inspection was carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which provides that the Chief Inspector may inspect particular local authority functions. The joint area review (JAR) was enhanced to enable coverage of youth work.

Part A: Summary of the report

Main findings

4. Youth work in Redcar and Cleveland is good. The local authority sufficiently secures its provision. Young people achieve well; they make good gains in their personal and social development and acquire useful skills and knowledge. Youth work practice is consistently good across a variety of settings. The well considered curriculum framework is used effectively in planning youth work that is responsive to the needs of young people and localities. Participation by young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those of Black and minority ethnic heritage is relatively high. However, there is no strategy to involve those who are looked after although they have been identified by the council as a priority group. Staff are enthusiastic and skilful but deployment is not always sufficiently flexible. Full-time workers have appropriate qualifications and new recruits are supported to gain professional awards. Accommodation and specialist resources are good overall. Leadership and management are strong. Good partnership working enhances provision for young people. The development of a broader offer of education leisure time activities as part of integrated youth support services has been slow. Thorough and rigorous quality assurance procedures are used effectively and improve quality. Young people's involvement in planning and evaluating the service is good and they influence provision. However, the structure

of youth forums to enable their systematic involvement in shaping council services is not yet fully established.

Key aspect inspection grades

Key Aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	3
	Quality of youth work practice	3
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	3
3	Leadership and management	3

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale
4: excellent / outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate/satisfactory; 1: inadequate*

Strengths

- Young people achieve well.
- Youth work practice is consistently good.
- The well considered curriculum is used effectively in planning youth work that is responsive to the needs of young people and localities.
- Comprehensive and rigorous quality assurance procedures are used effectively to improve the quality of the service.
- The views and contributions of young people are influential in shaping provision.

Areas for development

- The deployment of staff is not always sufficiently flexible.
- There is no strategy for involving young people who are looked after in youth work activities.

Part B: Commentary on the key aspects

Key Aspect 1: Standards of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice

5. The quality of young people's achievement is good. They enjoy taking part in youth work activities and are well motivated to gain new skills and understanding. Young people short-listing bids for the Youth Opportunity Fund demonstrated a well developed sense of fair play and a mature approach to making important decisions supported well by youth workers. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities displayed confidence in tackling new tasks such as designing resources about drugs awareness for use in other youth centres and planting hanging baskets. Young people working on anti-bullying projects were learning about the impact of such behaviour on others and increasing their knowledge of where young people can go for help. The Black and Minority Ethnic project group have gained in confidence and self-esteem and learned useful skills in planning and organising multi-cultural dance and fashion events attended last year by an audience of more than 500. Young people who are members of netball teams at Grangetown have taken part in tournaments in Europe which has contributed greatly to their personal development. A project challenging stereotypes of young people culminated in a presentation at the British Library in London; those involved gained Youth Achievement Awards for their contribution.

6. Young people gain recognition of their achievements through careful and thoughtful recording of what they have learned. Alongside Youth Achievement Awards the service has introduced new forms of accreditation such as the National Navigation Awards. The numbers successfully completing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award are increasing and include 21 young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

7. Youth work is consistently good in a variety of settings such as mobile, outreach, targeted and open access club provision. Knowledgeable and skilful workers have developed good, trusting relationships with young people that underpin effective youth work. They encourage them to extend their horizons and try out the unfamiliar; they create opportunities for young people to improve their knowledge and understanding. Youth workers successfully challenge unacceptable behaviour and young people are clear about what is expected of them. Youth workers support young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well in open access provision such as that at the Fusion Youth Club as well as at targeted provision at the Grenfell Club. At the South Bank Youth Centre youth workers provided a good balance of instruction, challenge and support in preparing young people to go camping as part of a programme of adventurous activities. On the mobile Advice Resource and Counselling Support Service youth workers provided clear information for young people as well as personal support. Youth work practice is well grounded in the curriculum framework and sessions are planned effectively around the five *Every Child Matters* themes. Young people routinely evaluate the quality of sessions and contribute to planning and delivery. On a very

few occasions, opportunities were missed for young people to take responsibility for their learning and to participate fully in the activities on offer.

Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

8. The quality of the curriculum and specialist resources is good. The curriculum framework provides a well thought out basis for planning that is used effectively by youth workers. Inclusion, equality and diversity are promoted well throughout the service and the contribution to *Every Child Matters* outcomes is good. The service provides a good range of youth work in a variety of settings and locations. Programmes are planned well to offer young people the opportunity to meet their peers from different clubs, projects and areas of the borough. The service responds well to the views of young people and the needs of localities.

9. Participation by young people of black and minority ethnic heritage and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Although there are good initiatives by individual workers, there is no strategy to extend the involvement of looked after children in youth work despite their being identified as a priority group in the Children and Young People's Plan.

10. Youth workers are enthusiastic and highly committed to their work. Full-time workers are suitably qualified. New recruits are supported well to develop their skills and gain professional qualifications. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place. The ratio of adults to young people was too high in a significant number of sessions observed where numbers attending were low; deployment was not sufficiently flexible.

11. Accommodation and specialist resources are good overall. They are used effectively by youth workers and young people. Premises are safe and accessible to those with disabilities. The newly built 25K youth and community centre provides excellent space designed specifically for youth work. Centres on school sites enable beneficial links to be established although there is not always sufficient access to the school facilities. The availability of resources varies between centres. The service is improving the access to information technology equipment, acknowledged as a weakness.

Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management

12. Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership and good communication have established a clear direction for the service and secured the commitment of youth workers and partners. Plans at all levels establish a sound basis for delivering youth work. Managers and team leaders regularly review progress against targets and check that service priorities are maintained as a focus. Although youth workers are encouraged to be innovative, targets are not always sufficiently challenging.

13. The council is developing locality-based integrated youth support services to improve outcomes for young people. The emphasis is currently on establishing multi-agency targeted youth support for vulnerable young people and those at risk of harm. Consultation with young people has taken place but progress in developing the broader offer of education leisure time activities has been delayed.

14. Resources are adequate overall and well managed. The service sufficiently secures youth work provision. However, the numbers of young people contacted by the service has fallen in recent years and in 2007-08 was 26%, close to the national benchmark of 25%. Participation has remained stable and at around 17%, a little above the national benchmark. The youth service budget reduced significantly between 2005 and 2007 leading to a reduction in the service although the allocation in 2007-08 of £135 per young person aged 13 to 19 was higher than the national average and that of comparable councils. There has been an increase in funding in 2008.

15. Good partnership working with voluntary and statutory sector organisations benefits young people. Joint work with Teenage Pregnancy services provides a well used sexual health service. Collaboration with the Youth Inclusion Programme and Connexions enhances advice and guidance for young people. The community and voluntary sector contribute to developments through membership of appropriate policy groups and committees. Partners take part in in-service training and peer inspection. However there is not yet a strategic approach to commissioning services.

16. Performance management is good. Well established, comprehensive and rigorous quality assurance procedures such as peer inspection and curriculum impact assessments improve the quality of provision. Good use is made of robust management information. Young people's involvement in planning and evaluating the youth service is good. They take part in peer inspections, participate in the recruitment of youth workers and take a strong lead in the distribution of the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds. They have their say through an annual survey of their views and "Youth Voice" events; their views are taken into account in shaping youth provision. However, the structure of youth forums to enable their systematic involvement in influencing council services is not yet fully established.