

Bradford Youth Service

Bradford Metropolitan District Children's Services Authority Area

Age group: All

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Introduction

1. Bradford youth service is located within the council's Services to Children and Young People. The acting head of service is supported by six senior managers. Team leaders manage five geographic areas and six cross-cutting themes. In 2006-07, there were 238 staff comprising 56 full-time equivalent (fte) and fractional youth workers and 34 fte who worked part-time. Administrative staff account for 11 fte. In addition, there were 25 volunteers. The service has recently been reorganised to align the structure with the five localities planned for the delivery of services for children and young people.

2. In 2006-07, the expenditure on youth work was £4.2 million; the service obtained external income of £2.5 million and provided some £190,384 to the voluntary and community sector through grant aid and £283,500 through commissioning. The Youth Opportunity Fund made available £284,217 and the Youth Capital Fund £286,000. There are around 48,000 young people aged 13 to 19; in 2006-07, 20% participated regularly in youth work activities and 23% had some contact with the service.

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. Bradford provides a good youth service that has some outstanding features. The authority sufficiently secures youth work provision. The standard of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice are good and at times outstanding. The service provides a very good range of activities, services and well targeted work that meets the needs of young people. Participation by young people is good and their involvement in planning, development and quality assurance of youth work is very strong. They are influential at all levels.

5. The excellent curriculum provides a coherent rationale for planning youth work. The service makes a good contribution to the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes and promotes community cohesion very well. The staff profile reflects Bradford's diversity. Almost all full-time, and the majority of part-time staff, are suitably qualified. Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place. Youth workers make effective use of accommodation and specialist resources. Strategic and operational planning are good. The youth service is well positioned to contribute to integrated youth support services in the five localities. Resources are in the main used effectively but the deployment of staff is not always sufficiently flexible. Quality assurance and performance management are effective. However, the computerised management information system is underdeveloped. Extensive and successful partnership working benefits young people.

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	4
3	Leadership and management	3

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

Strengths

- The standard of young people's achievements and youth work practice are good and at times outstanding.
- The excellent curriculum and very good range of diverse activities meet the needs of young people and localities.
- Successful partnership working is extensive and young people benefit from enhanced provision.
- Quality assurance and performance management are rigorous and comprehensive and lead to improvements in quality and standards.
- Young people are involved effectively in the planning, development and quality assurance of the service and are influential at all levels.

Areas for development

- The deployment of staff is not sufficiently flexible.
- The computerised management information system is underdeveloped.

Part B: Commentary on the key aspects

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

6. The standard of young people's achievements is good and at times outstanding. Young people speak with enthusiasm of their increased self-confidence, good personal development and opportunities to learn that help them make positive life choices. The service offers a good variety of accredited awards

and ways of recognising achievement. These are used effectively to engage and motivate young people.

7. Those involved in forums such as the Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament and the Child Poverty Campaign have well developed skills that enable them to participate effectively in political arenas. They speak confidently in public and take part in serious debate; some have participated in lobbying to influence decision makers at the highest level. Young people involved in the disability peer education group are developing the confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding to train others to evaluate the suitability of youth provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Young people at the Odsal and Wisbey detached project speak with pleasure of their ambitious plans to develop facilities for skateboarding and biking in a local park. Their bid to the Youth Capital and Youth Opportunity Funds, informed by their dealings with a professional designer and research of local views has secured the support of the Minister for Sport, a local Member of Parliament. At the Bangladeshi Youth Organisation young people are proud of their achievements. They are aware that their confidence and attitudes have been influenced by their engagement in youth work. In a few sessions, while enjoying themselves, some young people are not sufficiently well motivated to make significant progress.

8. The quality of youth work practice observed was good overall and some was outstanding; none was inadequate. Youth workers are adept at challenging young people and supporting them effectively, raising their aspirations and self-esteem and providing effective leadership. Young people are in the main respectful and youth workers manage disruptive behaviour skilfully while maintaining a calm environment.

9. At the Toller Youth Café, young women were supported well in writing song lyrics and preparing music for a recording making good use of a purpose built sound recording studio. A professional arts worker and one of their peers provided specialist expertise. Young people at the Buttershaw Youth Centre were planning to write, produce and perform a drama on a theme of local importance at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival which they would not previously have dreamed possible without the encouragement of youth workers. At the Canterbury Youth Centre workers adopted a variety of well considered approaches to engage young people in a broad range of activities that they enjoyed. They created a positive environment that supported learning and development through successful approaches to deal with inappropriate behaviour. Young people attending sessions preparing them for further work and study were set challenging tasks helping design their new base-room. In a few sessions, the pace was at times too slow and young people were not all given sufficient opportunities to make progress in their learning and development.

Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

10. The quality of the curriculum and resources is outstanding. The service, together with its partners, provides a very good range of diverse activities and services which meet the needs of young people and localities. Well targeted work is offered for example for Bangladeshi and Polish communities, young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable groups such as those at risk of offending. The service has begun systematic work to increase further the participation by young people who are looked after. Local provision is well planned and responsive. For example, session times have been changed to offer more activities on Fridays and at weekends as requested by young people.

11. The curriculum is based on a coherent rationale and provides an excellent framework for planning. The service makes a good contribution to the five *Every Child Matters* themes, and promotes inclusion, diversity, equality and community cohesion very well. A conflict resolution initiative is bringing together young people from different countries and local communities with little history of social mixing. Young people at the eco-pod have produced a useful, high quality DVD to promote intergenerational community cohesion.

12. Almost all full-time youth workers and the majority of part-time staff are suitably qualified. The service has recruited locally those with the necessary skills and attributes who may not yet have formal qualifications. The staff profile reflects the diversity of Bradford. An effective training programme is based on assessment of need. Development sessions, sharing of good practice and support from the organisational development and thematic teams help staff plan and deliver their work. Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.

13. Effective use is made of resources and accommodation. The 22 centres managed by the youth service provide accessible and safe accommodation. Some, such as the Shipley Youth Café and the Ted Francis Drake centre offer excellent accommodation but a few centres are in need of refurbishment. The eco-pod provides an innovative design that can be used for the consideration of environmental issues. The service makes use of around 45 buildings for which it does not have direct responsibility. These have benefits such as offering youth work in a suitable location but are not always ideally suited to that purpose. Youth workers adapt and make good use of such premises.

Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management

14. Leadership and management are good. Plans at all levels align well with the Children and Young People's Plan and set a clear agenda for youth work that has learning and development at the centre. The recent reorganisation positions the service well to function effectively in the planned locality structure working alongside partners to deliver integrated youth support services. However the appointment of locality managers has been delayed and the detail of provision that will be made for young people is still being discussed.

15. Resources allocated by the authority are adequate. The budget for each young person aged 13 to 19 is around the national average. The service is successful in attracting external funding and adapting its working practices to provide a responsive service. Participation by young people is above the national average. However, the ratio of staff to young people seen during the inspection was well below the service's target; deployment is insufficiently flexible. Each unit sets targets to increase participation, in particular by young women and local data shows there is already an improvement.

16. Extensive and successful partnerships with statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations benefit young people significantly. The voluntary sector is engaged well at a strategic level in developing provision. There are many examples of effective joint working which include collaboration with schools, the police, Connexions, the Youth Offending Service, Barnado's, the Bangladeshi Youth Organisation, Nightstop and Teenage Pregnancy.

17. Quality assurance and performance management are rigorous, comprehensive and effective. They cover partnership work where appropriate. Quarterly performance clinics where progress by teams against their targets is reviewed and self-evaluation of their practice by workers at each session are notable features of the well planned approach to quality improvement. Managers and workers make good use of this information in assessing performance and quality but the youth service's computerised management information system is underdeveloped and does not provide sufficiently analytical reports to support fully review and planning.

18. The involvement of young people in the planning, development and quality assurance of youth work is very good. There are many examples of their influence at a strategic level, for example in the development of youth cafes. They are involved in the recruitment of youth work staff and in the day-to-day planning, delivery and evaluation of provision. They are encouraged to take responsibility and make a positive contribution within sessions. Around 160 young people are involved in the service as volunteers.