



# Manchester Youth Service Report

Manchester Children's Services Authority Area

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**Better  
education  
and care**

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## Introduction

1. Manchester youth service operates from a range of projects and locations across the city. There are 21 stand-alone, council-owned youth centres, and a further 18 venues are rented. A mobile unit is supported by the Greater Manchester Police. The service has three deputy principal youth officers and is led by an interim head of youth service. There are 65 full-time and 163 part-time workers which equates to 93 full-time equivalent youth workers. Since April 2006, the service has been located within the Integrated Children's Service directorate of the local authority. The net budget made available by the local authority in 2005-2006 was £4.23 million and the service successfully attracted an additional £3 million from external sources. Fourteen percent of young people aged 13-19 are reached annually by the service. This figure does not include high numbers of young people contacted through its significant levels of detached work.

2. The joint area review (JAR) was enhanced to enable coverage of the youth service. Inspectors considered the youth service's self assessment and met with officers, a cross section of staff, representatives of the voluntary sector and other partners. They reviewed key service documentation and carried out direct observation of a sample of youth work sessions in the East Manchester district as part of the JAR neighbourhood study area as well as other observations of practice across the city.

## Part A: Summary of the report

### Main findings

#### Effectiveness and value for money

3. Manchester youth service is an adequate service which provides satisfactory value for money. Many vulnerable and disaffected young people achieve well and make gains in their personal and social development. The quality of youth work is good. Partnership work at club and project level is effective especially with the voluntary sector. Managers have taken recent and decisive action to address areas for development. Progress on implementing recommendations from the last inspection in 2003 is satisfactory. The proportion of the council's education budget spent on the youth service is in line with national averages. Young people are involved insufficiently in developing the service and the management of the curriculum is inadequate. The service is effectively implementing the council's scheme to assess the individual performance of the workforce. However, measures to assess the quality of projects and activities and their outcomes for young people across the service are underdeveloped.

## Strengths

- Young people relate well to each other, form good relationships with youth workers and value the opportunities provided by the service.
- Vulnerable and challenging young people make significant gains in their personal and social development that are sustained over time.
- Youth workers have a good knowledge and understanding of the young people with whom they work.

## Areas for development

- The operational management of and support for the curriculum.
- Updating and monitoring of policies, especially those relating to special needs, race relations and detached work.
- The participation of young people in decision making and consultative forums.
- Measures to assess the quality of projects and activities and their impact on outcomes for young people across the service.

## Key aspect inspection grades

| Key aspect |                                                     | Grade |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1          | Standards of young people's achievement             | 2     |
|            | Quality of youth work practice                      | 3     |
| 2          | Quality of curriculum and resources                 | 2     |
| 3          | Strategic and operational leadership and management | 2     |

The table above shows overall grades about provision. Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale:

**Grade 4:** Outstanding: a service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users:

**Grade 3:** Good: a service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users:

**Grade 2:** Adequate: a service that delivers only minimum requirements for users:

**Grade 1:** Inadequate: a service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users.

## Part B: The youth service's contribution to Every Child Matters outcomes

4. The service makes a satisfactory contribution to outcomes in a number of areas. Existing curriculum themes have been reconfigured to reflect the Every Child Matters outcomes and are evident in work with young people. The service promotes healthy lifestyles, including sexual health, through its work in clubs, projects and counselling services. Young people enjoy a range of programmes that

help them learn and achieve whilst having fun. Service targets include contributing to reducing the level of youth nuisance and encouraging young people into education, employment and training. An effective entry to employment (e2e) programme provides positive outcomes for young people. Young people excluded from or at risk of exclusion from school benefit from complementary education programmes. A range of programmes and activities successfully contribute to diverting young people from anti-social behaviour and the criminal justice system. Good support and referral is available to young people through detached work.

## **Part C: Commentary on the key aspects**

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

5. The standard of young people's achievement is satisfactory overall. Young people excluded from or at risk of exclusion from school achieve GCSE grades and OCN certificates in financial literacy, for example, through an effective complementary education programme. An E2E programme at Higher Blackley has successfully enabled over 80% of participants to engage in education, employment or training. At a support group in Monsall, all the young mothers had achieved NVQ level 1 in information technology and were designing a website. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme is well established and young people benefit from it. A stronger focus on accredited outcomes by the service has seen a recent increase in the numbers of young people achieving AQA certificates and other forms of accreditation. Overall, however, external accreditation of young people's achievement is at an early stage of development.

6. Young people relate well to each other, form good relationships with youth workers and value highly the support they receive in dealing with difficult personal issues. Many vulnerable and challenging young people make significant gains in their personal and social development that are sustained over time. Young people are able to articulate how their confidence and self esteem has developed and what they have learnt. A few members become volunteers with the service. A project for Asian young women helped them reflect on and understand their role in the community. High numbers of young people attending Crossley House and Powerhouse youth centres benefit from taking part in the informal learning and recreational opportunities provided. They learn to listen to each other, make decisions together and organise themselves effectively. There are too few opportunities, however, for young people to participate in decision-making and consultative forums.

7. Youth work practice is good. The best work is well-planned and related to the service's priorities and curriculum. Workers generally have a good knowledge of their local communities and the needs of young people. They work well with other statutory agencies and the voluntary sector. A wide range of skills and

techniques are used. In the majority of settings, documentation is good and used well to plan and evaluate work. Whilst many workers however can describe the progress of individuals, the recording and tracking of outcomes for young people is weak. Although workers frequently negotiate programmes and activities with young people, they do not set sufficiently challenging individual or group targets. They do however manage young people's behaviour well.

8. Workers engaged in the Positive Activities for Young People programmes contribute significantly to a reducing youth nuisance and crime. The youth contact team and other outreach/detached work is effective and sensitively managed with good use of referrals to other groups better placed to provide specialist support to young people.

9. The management of individual projects and activities generally is good. For example, at an effective session for lesbian and gay young people, good leadership with a clear sense of direction and thoughtful evaluation led to positive outcomes for young people. The majority of workers guide and support young people. Few opportunities exist for workers to share learning and good practice with other colleagues, and too many programmes and activities act in isolation of each other. In some weaker examples, the work is not honed to meet the needs of the young people attending the sessions.

## Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

10. The quality of curriculum and resources is satisfactory overall. The breadth of issues covered by the curriculum is wide and appropriate. It provides a good range of activities and projects which include the arts, media, information technology and sports as well as topics such as sexual health and drugs. The service provides good, professionally-produced resources, matched to the needs of young people. However, few resources are available in community languages.

11. The curriculum framework appropriately reflects national outcomes, including those of Every Child Matters, as well as local priorities. It sets an effective context for delivering youth work. However, there is no indication of how it will be monitored and evaluated or its effectiveness assessed. Overall leadership, management and development of the curriculum are inadequate.

12. The service is committed to equality and diversity. Specific programmes support young people from black and minority ethnic groups, Somali communities and asylum-seeking and refugee families. Young people from traveller families are encouraged to take part in youth service activities. The youth contact team works effectively with 'hard to reach' and disaffected young people. Projects and activities for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are limited and specific support for young carers is poor.

13. The service has a high number of full-time workers, the majority of whom are qualified and whose skills are well used. They provide good support for part-time staff, of whom almost 40% are unqualified, and volunteers. Deployment is

generally satisfactory although there is little weekend provision. A pool of staff, who have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau, has been established to provide effective cover for holiday periods and in times of need. Many aspects of the training programme are good and there is a high rate of take up by the voluntary sector. However, induction programmes are not well co-ordinated and access to basic youth work training is inconsistent.

14. The quality of accommodation is mixed. Newer centres such as the Powerhouse are well appointed; others are in poor condition and basic facilities are inadequate. Workers and young people produce good wall displays and generally show respect for centres. Although an audit has been completed, not all centres are compliant with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. There are minimal facilities for those with restricted mobility, impaired hearing and vision and other special needs.

### Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management

15. Strategic and operational leadership and management are satisfactory. Strong leadership and positive promotion of the service are provided by the interim head of service. Strategic planning with partners is satisfactory, but partnership work is most effective at local level. The direction of the service is clearly communicated to staff at all levels. However, restructuring of the new Children's Services is incomplete and there is uncertainty about how youth workers will be deployed in the future. The service makes a significant contribution to the council's analysis of young people's needs. Progress in implementing the recommendations of the last inspection is satisfactory. Full-time workers are contributing to the wider management of the service through, for example, workforce development and business planning groups.

16. Council funding to support the service is satisfactory and it successfully attracts almost half of its total budget from external sources. Resources are managed efficiently and recent training has helped to improve financial controls further. All staff are trained in child protection and mandatory checks are carried out with the Criminal Records Bureau prior to appointment. Although policies are in place in line with legislation regarding equality, diversity and inclusion, their implementation is not well monitored. For example, no formal system is in place to report race, hate and homophobic incidents. Workers risk assess settings and activities to ensure the safety of young people and staff. However, many workers are not aware of service guidelines for lone working.

17. The involvement of young people in the service is underdeveloped. A participation worker has been appointed and a policy to engage young people is in place. However, the insecure nature of funding for eight peer workers and five youth advisers in this area leaves the work in a precarious position. Within many clubs and projects, young people contribute effectively to the planning and evaluation of activities but it is not consistent or systematic across the service.



18. The support and management of staff is satisfactory. A new management information system is enabling the service to collect, analyse and use data more effectively. Supervision and individual performance reviews are conducted regularly and are valued. Staff morale is buoyant, despite concerns about the future. However, senior managers do not focus sufficiently on evaluating the overall quality of projects and activities in order to improve outcomes for young people.