



Haringey Youth Service Report

Haringey Council Children's Services Authority Area

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Introduction

1. The population in Haringey is 224,300 with approximately 75% of children and young people being of minority ethnic origin. Around 19,100 young people are aged 13 to 19. Haringey Youth Service has from April 2006 been managed within the School Standards and Inclusion division of the Children's Services Directorate. The service has an interim management team, recently strengthened by the recruitment of a head of service and training manager, due to come into post in summer 2006. There are 9 full-time youth workers posts, 5 full-time managers making up the current interim management team and 2.5 full-time equivalent administrative posts. The service employs 47 part time workers on permanent or fixed term contracts, making 13.5 full time equivalent posts. Large numbers of volunteers are deployed widely. At the time of this inspection, one of the authority's three youth centres was partially closed for major refurbishment. A purpose-built centre for Duke of Edinburgh's Award training has recently been opened. Youth work is delivered from the remaining two centres and up to 14 other sites during term time, rising to nearly 30 venues in the school holidays. The service's total budget for 2006-2007 is £1,815,472, representing 1.3% of the education budget.

2. The joint area review (JAR) carried out in Haringey was enhanced to enable coverage of the youth service. Inspectors took the service's self-assessment into account and met with a cross section of young people, managers, staff and partners. They reviewed key service documentation and carried out direct observation of a sample of youth work sessions including some serving the West Green and Northumberland Park areas selected for the JAR neighbourhood study.

Part A: Summary of the report

Main findings

Effectiveness and value for money

3. The service is inadequate and provides unsatisfactory value for money. Young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice are, on the whole, unsatisfactory, although there are some good opportunities in project work through which some young people gain recognition and accreditation for personal development. Weak leadership over time, together with too little involvement of young people in managing the service, a lack of rigorous quality assurance and poor implementation of the curriculum framework, have had an adverse effect on standards. The range of provision is unsatisfactory. However, closely targeted partnership work provides an appropriate programme of purposeful activities to enable young people to make a positive contribution in the community. A legacy of failure to collect and manage data prevents the service from measuring its effectiveness. In practice the number of young people benefiting is not known. Elected members and senior managers recognise the weaknesses of the service and have put funding in place to support improvement. Robust action has been taken

and significant changes made in key areas including management structure, the youth work curriculum, recruitment and investment in premises. It is however too soon to see the impact of these changes. Staff work hard to maintain good relations with young people during the current period of transition.

Strengths

- Young people achieve well in project work.
- Opportunities for accreditation and recognition of personal development are accessible to young people of all abilities.
- Partnerships are well targeted to enable young people to make a positive contribution in the community.

Areas for development

- Improve the quality of youth work practice and, consequently, achievement.
- Improve the extent of the involvement of young people in managing, planning and evaluating youth work.
- Extend the range of youth work activity.
- Take urgent steps to improve management information in order that the effectiveness of the service can begin to be measured.
- Monitor and quality assure youth work rigorously.

Key aspect inspection grades

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

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

Grade 4: A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users.

Grade 3: A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users.

Grade 2: A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users.

Grade 1: A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users.

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

4. Youth workers and their local partners' contribution to the every child matters outcomes for young people is satisfactory overall, but historic inadequate leadership and management of the service detract from the full impact and range of this work. Effective recruitment procedures, including procedures for vetting volunteers, and risk assessment of activities and premises provide a safe environment. There are very good opportunities for a few young people to acquire high level skills in project work. Young people of all abilities can gain accreditation which they regard as useful to their future career prospects, although not enough young people take up these opportunities. Effective partnerships encourage many young people, including the most disadvantaged, to take part in wider community events such as the carnival. The well-targeted holiday programme contributes to reducing antisocial behaviour. Healthy outcomes are adequately supported through indoor and outdoor activities and an accessible youth counselling service. However, insufficient focus on health issues and weaknesses in delivering the curriculum limit young people's development in understanding healthy lifestyles.

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 standards of young people's achievements are inadequate. Observations of a sample of work found only a few good examples. All of these were in well-planned specific interest projects, such a dance group preparing for the carnival and the Exposure group in which young people acquire print and visual media production skills suitable for the competitive media industry. Young people participating in Leaders in Training rapidly develop their political understanding, putting forward themes such as racism and violence for their campaigns. In all these instances, personal development is marked; young people are self confident and pleased with their achievement. Recognition through accreditation is an integral part of project work, which is greatly valued by participants, although few are yet involved.

6. Youth participation in the wider community and social and political development has been given satisfactory support through partnership working. Young people's views have been sought on aspects of the reorganisation of children and young people's services. The youth service is energetically leading the formation of a borough wide youth council, providing an improved forum for young people's personal and social development.

7. Apart from projects and partnership work, achievement was found to be at best satisfactory but the majority was inadequate. Invariably, this was linked to poor youth work practice: overall, youth work practice is inadequate. Leadership in supporting and guiding young people is weak and lacks challenge. Workers are not

adept at planning sessions that combine learning with enjoyment or which develop topical issues within sessions. Consequently, sessions are mainly recreational in nature and lack continuity for purposeful and progressive activities. The good relationships exhibited between staff and young people are positive foundations but are not built upon effectively. Workers do not fully understand the informal learning model at the heart of the curriculum and miss many opportunities to develop important topics like healthy eating or understanding of local democracy as they arise.

8. Youth workers do not demonstrate high enough expectations of what young people can achieve. Their planning is cursory with no clear links to outcomes. They are not yet able to draw upon a wide enough range of methods in engaging young people or fluent in using the new curriculum documentation designed to assist them in planning. Training to support staff in developing these vital aspects of practice has been lacking.

Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

9. The quality of the curriculum and resources is inadequate and the range of youth provision unsatisfactory. Although local authority facilities are well spread geographically and partnerships with voluntary organisations increase the range, there is insufficient access to high quality generic work. In addition, there is no routine outreach work and the mobile facility is not yet fully in action. Moreover, detached workers have been diverted to cover sessional duties.

10. Considerable investment has been made in the refurbishment of one of the three local authority youth centres on the east side of the borough. The temporary disruption has exacerbated matters, presenting voluntary partners, who formerly held activities there, with particular difficulties in continuity. Activities, including integrated provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities have been dispersed. This period of uncertainty, although necessary to achieve improved facilities, is impacting adversely on the progress of group members, and is set to continue at least into the summer period 2006. It is notable that the new centre has been designed to high standards, compliant with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and aims to include up to date health, drama and media resources.

11. Further investment has been secured recently to open a modern Duke of Edinburgh's Award training centre. Plans are being implemented to increase the reach of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme in partnership with a wide proportion of schools. In this and other measures planned to increase access to formal accreditation throughout the curriculum, the needs of young people of all abilities are well considered. Recognition is offered through a range of ASDAN, Millennium Volunteer awards and local awards such as peer mentoring and Exposure media accreditation.

12. Premises across the borough vary in quality and accessibility. The two local authority centres still in use are satisfactory, safe and secure. Most shared community facilities present a range of difficulties, the most serious being access and personal security in locations where there is a high risk of violent crime. Staff vigilance to mitigate the risks is good. Specialised equipment used in media and sports projects is good. General resources such as furniture, pool tables and computers are adequate, if a little tired-looking. Staff make efforts to use indoor and outdoor space well.

13. The recently produced curriculum framework has a strong emphasis on learning, empowerment, participation and equal opportunities. It is underpinned by a clear rationale reflecting local and national priorities. Youth workers are keen to put it into practice effectively. However, there has been insufficient training to support staff in developing their knowledge on broader outcomes for young people and different methods of delivery. The service provides regular supervision, team meetings and appraisals for all staff, but managers have not used these arrangements systematically to help them assess how well staff understand the curriculum or implement it. A suitable range of training is offered on corporate issues but opportunities are not sharply focussed on professional practice.

14. There is an adequate mix of qualifications and skills in the staff group. All full time workers and the interim management team are professionally qualified to a sufficient level. However, the fact that not all of the full time staff team possess a youth work qualification may have contributed to the weakness in implementing the curriculum. Sessional staff, similarly, are qualified to an appropriate level, but not all in youth work. They bring a range of useful sports and counselling skills to their teams although this in itself does not support the delivery of high quality generic youth work.

Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management

15. The service has struggled for some time with turnover in senior staffing, poor management information and a lack of objectivity in measuring its impact. The self-assessment demonstrates an understanding of needs in the area but the high aspirations expressed in it are not yet evident. There is, however, a consensus between the interim head of the service, the director and the relevant elected members about the priorities for improvement. Strategies are compliant with Race Relations Act and safeguarding legislation. Clear plans and essential policy documents have been put in place, helpfully linked to the overarching children and young people's plan and needs analysis. Most are still embryonic but the service now has an improved capacity in comparison with the recent past.

16. No comprehensive and accurate data exists in relation to young peoples' attendances and engagement. The interim management team has made some improvements and are considering further changes. Staff collect information locally and suggest that numbers accessing the service have increased over the past year. However, the lack of verified information makes it difficult to assess performance.

17. Satisfactory partnership arrangements are in place with Connexions and the Community Safety Partnership. Work is particularly well-targeted around participation, inclusion and prevention of antisocial behaviour. Other partnerships, such as those with schools and health are as yet at an early stage of developed.

18. Means of monitoring and evaluating provision lack rigour. Quality assurance measures are insufficient and, in part, explain the demonstrably poor achievement of young people through the generic youth work programme. Staff at all levels do not engage young people well in helping them to evaluate the service, assure its quality and manage its future direction to bring about improvements.