



**Better  
education  
and care**

# Greenwich Youth Service Report

London Borough of Greenwich Children's Services Authority  
Area

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## Introduction

1. Youth work in Greenwich is provided through a range of initiatives and programmes in 22 youth centres, local parks, nine secondary schools, an advice and information centre and through outdoor education and detached youth work. The service extends provision for young people through joint working with the voluntary sector. The head of service is supported by a management team of nine that includes area team managers who oversee provision based in the four areas of the borough. Cross cutting projects and initiatives are assigned to three youth programme co-ordinators and four portfolio officers. Since April 2006 the Youth and Play Service has been located in the Directorate of Children's Services. An equivalent of 52 full-time staff comprises 16 full-time and 99 part-time youth workers; there are eight administrators supporting the services. The budget made available by the local authority in 2005/06 was £3.0 million and an additional £1 million was derived from contracts, partnership work and grants. In 2005/06 the service reached 25% of the 20,354 young people aged 13 to 19.

2. The Joint Area Review (JAR) was enhanced to enable coverage of the youth service. Inspectors considered the self-assessment and met with officers and a cross-section of staff, partners and young people. They reviewed key service documentation and carried out direct observations of a small sample of youth work sessions including some in the neighbourhood study area of West Greenwich.

## Part A: Summary of the report

### Main findings

#### Effectiveness and value for money

3. Greenwich provides a good youth service that offers good value for money. The standard of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice are good overall albeit that youth workers do not always provide sufficient challenge for young people. There is strong leadership. Effective performance management is in place and has helped establish changes made over the past 18 months and is improving the quality of the service. Good use is made of increasingly robust data and information in planning and evaluating provision. Equality and diversity are promoted well. Effective partnerships with statutory services and the voluntary youth sector benefit young people. The curriculum is well planned and responsive to identified needs. However, the quality of accommodation and facilities constrains the offer. Too low a proportion of part-time staff have appropriate qualifications.

## Strengths

- Young people achieve well across a range of programmes.
- Much youth work practice is good.
- Very good leadership has established a clear vision and priorities shared throughout the service.
- Effective performance management and comprehensive quality assurance procedures are improving the service.
- Strong partnerships benefit young people.

## Areas for development

- Practice in a minority of sessions offers insufficient challenge for young people and the purpose of activities is not always clear.
- The quality of accommodation and facilities constrains provision.
- The proportion of part-time staff who are fully qualified in youth work is too low.

## 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	2
3	Strategic and operational leadership and management	3

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

Grade 4: Excellent/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 contribution of the youth service to outcomes for young people is good overall and aspects are very good. The curriculum is based on the five outcomes and work in youth clubs includes topics such as healthy eating, smoking cessation, drugs and alcohol awareness and sex and relationships education. Young people

take part in a variety of activities and gain awards for their achievements. Appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. The award winning multi-agency Teen Talk advice service has helped reduce unwanted pregnancies amongst young women at Kidbrooke School. Young people who have been excluded are supported well to return to school by the Time Out project. Greenwich Young People's Council (GYPC) and the emerging area forums offer young people a good opportunity to participate in decision making. Last summer 2,500 young people took part in the annual Parks Programme that offers a variety of activities and helps reduce anti-social behaviour. Young people at risk of not being in employment, education or training improve their life chances through the Plus programme and the U-project.

## **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 good across a range of programmes. Young people's social and emotional development is supported well by youth workers and many young people make good progress. Achievements through membership of the GYPC are very good. Members of the council have successfully planned and organised a conference. Young people describe how they have grown in confidence and how their attitudes and values have changed. Their ability to function politically and socially is excellent. Young people have been involved in developing a drugs education policy and have delivered sessions based on the policy in youth centres. Those taking part in the Winter Plus training and work experience programme have gained useful skills and confidence that help them find employment or continue with education and training. In Teen Talk young people gain a good understanding of issues such as bullying and learn how to take responsibility for their decisions supported and challenged well by youth workers.

6. The service is providing young people with an increasing range of formal opportunities for accreditation of their achievements for example through the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, awards for sporting activities and the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme. Last year 1,005 awards were accredited, exceeding the target set. The service has begun to make good use of portfolios to record young people's progress. They value recognition of their achievements.

7. Much good practice was observed. Youth workers gain the trust of young people and mutual respect has been established. Behaviour is good in most sessions and a calm atmosphere supports participation. A code of conduct has been developed with young people who support its implementation. Youth workers handle potential conflict well; in detached work they defuse difficult situations and deal with challenging behaviour with skill and understanding. In the Winter Plus programme and Time Out, detailed planning takes account of the individual needs of young people and their progress is carefully monitored. Youth

workers supporting the Greenwich Youth Forum skilfully engage young people and allow them to take control while providing suitable support and guidance.

8. In the few weaker sessions the purpose of activities is not always clear. Young people are not enabled to take leading roles in planning and running activities, nor are they sufficiently challenged to develop new skills and extend their personal development.

## Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

9. The quality of curriculum and resources is satisfactory overall. In the past 18 months, managers have realigned the curriculum to reflect service priorities. In planning the curriculum, good use is made of data such as demographic trends, ethnicity, gender, disability, measures of deprivation and educational attainment as well as local intelligence. Feedback from partners and young people informs planning. Managers make good use of their membership of multi-agency forums such as the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Youth Offending Service Management Board to shape provision.

10. Overall there is a good range of well managed provision that includes open access sessions and detached work across the borough, sporting, outdoor and residential activities and effectively targeted provision. Suitable provision is made for vulnerable and minority groups. For example, the transitions project for young people with complex needs, DISC for young people who are deaf and the work with Muslim young people. Staff are supported well in implementing the new curriculum framework. Plans for areas, units, projects and sessions align well with the Youth and Play Service plan and are consistent across the borough. Multi-agency projects are co-ordinated efficiently.

11. Equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted well although in some provision the diversity of the population is not reflected. The service complies with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; equality monitoring informs plans effectively. Inclusion and disability officers support youth workers in developing the offer for excluded, hard to reach and vulnerable groups.

12. Appropriate child protection policies and procedures are in place although not all staff are aware of who they should contact if an issue of child protection should arise. Most full-time staff have suitable qualifications in youth work but a large proportion of part-time staff do not; many are qualified at the lowest level. Overall around 50% have youth work qualifications. Newly appointed staff are required to gain qualifications within two years of appointment. The well planned in-house training programme is of high quality. Performance review and development is rigorous and helps staff improve their practice and meet objectives. Staff show high levels of commitment and morale is high.

13. The location and quality of accommodation and facilities constrain the activities that can be offered. Only eight of the 22 buildings used by the youth service are owned by the authority; another two are in school buildings. Buildings

that are leased have a shared purpose which in some cases limits their development as youth centres. The service complies with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. Where possible, suitable equipment such as mobile ramps and hoists are available and adaptations have been made. However, there is not yet full access for wheel chair users and those with restricted mobility to nine of the 22 buildings. Some centres such as the purpose built Hawksmoor and West Thamesmead Youth Centres provide good accommodation but a few centres are inadequate.

### Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management

14. Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership has established a clear vision shared throughout the service. The Youth and Play Service joined the Children's Services directorate in April 2006 and already makes a full contribution supported well by senior managers and elected members. The priorities for youth work are understood by workers at all levels. Good performance management incorporates effective planning and regular monitoring of all aspects of the service. Unit costs are monitored on a quarterly basis by managers to evaluate efficiency at all levels of the service. The service offers good value for money.

15. Robust quality assurance procedures are in place and cover provision made in partnership with the voluntary sector. Managers have completed monitoring visits to all units and programmes in the past year and are aware of their strengths and areas for development. Actions taken in response are improving the quality of the service. Good use is made of data such as attendance and achievement as well as feedback from young people. Staff understand the purpose and importance of returning accurate data, although doing so manually is time consuming. The service has insufficient information technology to meet fully the needs of either staff or young people.

16. Young people are involved well at a strategic level in planning provision and monitoring quality, in particular through the GYPC who have evaluated the implementation of the authority's Pledge to young people. The GYPC is represented on the quality assurance review group and the Children's Services scrutiny panel. However, not all young people are aware of the GYPC or the forums that are operating in their area.

17. Strong partnership working is benefiting young people with successful examples including work with Connexions, the Youth Offending Team, social care services, the police and the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team. The youth service has a contract with Connexions to deliver information, advice and guidance on a range of topics in a well used One Stop Shop, one of three in the borough. Partners value the citizenship programmes offered in seven secondary schools and the pupil referral unit. A range of effective partnerships with voluntary sector organisations are in place for the delivery of youth work. Area meetings held four times a year include all stakeholders.