

Children Families and Community Health.
Youth Engagement Consultation 2016/2017

Key dates	
14th Nov to 6 th Dec 16	Start of formal consultation period. Meetings with staff as one to ones and in groups. Individual meetings with staff and service users.
6th Dec 16	Close consultation period (3 weeks post launch meeting) and consider submitted proposals and comments.
6th Dec to 12th Dec	Collate response to the feedback received.
12th Dec 16	Meet with staff to update on consultation feedback and process.

Consultation Response Summary

Introduction

Relevant documents were posted on the Intranet following the staff consultation meeting held on 14.11.16. Subsequently individual staff held one-to-one and team meetings with the operational manager. A Unison union representative attended the group consultation meeting but was not requested by the staff to attend the individual or the group meetings. Individuals fed back through these meetings and in email responses. Some responses represented a group of staff. A considerable number of comments were also received from other professionals and from service users.

The majority of the meetings and communications relate to questions regarding the options presented in the consultation document, proposals for the restructure and some regarding individual circumstances (dealt with at an individual level). As a whole the response is that there should be no reduction in this service, or failing that the minimal reduction possible so that there is limited impact on young people.

I would like to thank all those that have contributed to this consultation process.

Summary

Below is a summary of the feedback and responses to suggestions and alternative options.

Feedback	Response
<p><u>Seek an alternative funding or provider.</u></p> <p>Staff suggested that alternative funding could be found so that there would be no reduction in YEW funding, for example accessing funding recently allocated for school improvement.</p> <p>Traded Services – Develop Trading by offering new tailored packages of support for early intervention, primary to secondary school transition programme, Information Advice and Guidance, interviews, etc.</p> <p>Offer the running of Centre based youth activities to other providers.</p>	<p>As part of the ongoing wider budget management and decision making process alternative funding options have been considered as alternatives to direct savings from service. Many services have already been subject to savings and the YEW review is one option being considered against a number already made within the council. The School Improvement budget is not considered as a viable option for savings given this is also a priority for the Council</p> <p>Traded YEW Services are currently offered in the Trading prospectus shared with all Schools. Current take up by the schools remains small. Managers will continue to seek additional income from this source however this will take time and cannot be guaranteed as it is dependent on schools buying in services.</p> <p>The option of running centre based activities could be considered once financial decisions have been made.</p>
<p><u>Remodel Children's Services structure</u></p> <p>Staff suggested that other children's Services teams could be remodelled to include youth engagement workers as part of their structure. For example, Social Care teams redesign their staffing establishment to include youth engagement workers.</p>	<p>Children's Social Care services were remodelled in 2014 and many functions of this service can only be carried out by Registered Social Workers. Whilst YEWs would undoubtedly add value to the work of the social work service these roles would still require funding.</p> <p>All children's services teams have undergone savings and efficiency exercises as part of SBC budget setting across the last 3 years and will continue to be sought where possible. For example the management overheads have been reduced by over 35% and savings have been made in children's centres.</p>

<p><u>Redeployment process</u></p> <p>Staff expressed concerns that any redeployment process would be fair and equitable which would include redeployment into other vacant posts. In particular redeployment into the family service where they are currently recruiting.</p>	<p>Subject to the decision of Cabinet we will be working to the Managing Change, Restructuring, Redeployment and Redundancy Policy which will ensure fair and proper processes are followed. Where vacancies exist in other services these will be considered. (see summary in the consultation document). We cannot redeploy staff in advance of the decision being made by Cabinet in terms of budget reduction.</p>
<p><u>Staff concerns re the impact of savings on service users</u></p> <p>The service is important for young people in order to address their emotional health, enable young people to access specialist services, and to support them accessing education up to the age of 18. Staff are concerned that there are a lack of services in Swindon to work with young people.</p>	<p>Financial decisions will be made by cabinet in the full knowledge of potential impact to YEW service delivery and wider Children Services. Feedback from this consultation will be presented in the cabinet report. Elected members will make an evidenced and informed decision as a result of this consultation process.</p>
<p><u>Service user feedback</u></p> <p>Parents and young people were consulted and feedback was collated. Service users described where YEWs had been significant in helping them overcome their problems. There was strong support for the service with examples given of how young people had been helped.</p> <p>See Appendix D & E & F</p>	<p>The voice of the young people of Swindon is recognised as being really important to this consultation. Their feedback has been shared with the Leader and Cabinet Member in full and is also available in full on line for all to have access to. This summary will be shared in the Cabinet report itself.</p>
<p><u>Partner agency feedback</u></p> <p>Partner agencies were consulted and invited to provide comment on the proposals. Individuals including professionals in other children's services including schools and colleges gave testimonials overwhelmingly in support of the service and advocated for making no savings or the minimum possible to</p>	<p>We appreciate the time taken for partners to provide these comments and testimonials. It has made a significant contribution to this consultation and shows how important that these views are considered when financial decisions are made.</p>

<p>reduce the impact they were certain would be seen.</p> <p>See Appendix C</p>	
<p><u>Maintain Youth 1st provision</u></p> <p>There is potential for Youth First to be the one and only youth provision for Swindon and to seek external funding and employ its own staff as such (set up as a charity with a management committee).</p> <p>Examples can be seen working in other towns and cities such as Bristol which have similar facilities as Youth First but with a staff team of youth workers in place to deliver the work with young people effectively.</p> <p>For full proposal see Appendix A</p>	<p>The proposal is to make savings by reducing the Youth Engagement Service from a targeted service to a smaller service with a specific focus on the most vulnerable children and young people in Swindon. These will include; Children Looked After, Youth Offenders and those at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation.</p> <p>The review will determine a future model for delivery that would in essence only reach those most at risk/vulnerable and provide the minimum statutory duty.</p> <p>Alternative models of delivery could be explored at any time before and after financial decisions are made, but would be reliant on access to as yet unidentified funding.</p>
<p><u>Make no savings against the youth engagement service.</u></p> <p>The rationale for this proposal is;</p> <p>that the range and severity of the issues young people face mean youth engagement should retain its present capacity.</p> <p>that staff are established, skilled, resilient, motivated, connected both with professionals and families and can offer continuity where other services may not due to staff turnover and competing priorities.</p> <p>that the Council will not be able to discharge its statutory duties regarding education NEET.</p>	<p>The rationale made within the feedback is accepted as a fair representation as to the likely impact and issues that young people will face dependent on the option selected to be taken forward.</p> <p>Financial decisions will be made by Cabinet with this knowledge of potential impact to service delivery.</p> <p>Elected members will make an informed decision taking into account this consultation process and the overall pressures on the Councils Budgets to ensure it is able to set a balanced budget.</p>

For full details see online Appendix B, C & G	
The below Appendices give more detail in regards to the above summary and are produced online unedited (other than where it is data sensitive)	
Appendix A	Youth First Proposal, why we have YEWs, why YEWs are unique. Team proposal.
Appendix B	Proposal for no change, case studies.
Appendix C	Partner agencies collated comments,
Appendix D	Young people feedback Central South area,
Appendix E	Parents feedback Central South area.
Appendix F	Parents and Young People Feedback North and Central North area.
Appendix G	In depth analysis of YEW activity and outcomes. Central North staff collated feedback.

Appendix A

YEW consultation thoughts/views

Youth First proposal

- Sessions on a Monday (16-19year olds) and Thursday (13-16year olds) are offered to Youth For Christ to see if they want to take over the running of them. They would also take on the existing volunteers and any new parent volunteers who come forward.
- They can apply for funding through Community First (are YFC a charity?)
- If Youth First is bulldozed and a new facility is built then consideration is to be given to how these sessions are run in future (does rent need to be paid? Who manages the building? Long term 'aim' of the facility?)
- There is potential for Youth First to be the 'one and only youth provision' for Swindon and to seek external funding and employ its own staff as such (set up as a charity with a management committee, examples are www.wolvercoteypc.org.uk, www.thestationbristol.org.uk and www.thewayyouthzone.org all of which have similar facilities as Youth First but a staff team of youth workers in place to deliver the work with young people effectively.

Why we have YEWs

Young people are dealing with a range of issues, including:

- Family breakdown/living in two homes/step parents and families
- Domestic violence both physical and emotional – unhealthy role models, stress
- Increased poor emotional health i.e. anxiety, poor self esteem, lack of positive emotional expression, anger and frustration
- Being bullied, in person and online
- Sexual orientation/identify issues
- Changed expectations at home i.e. parents not wanting them at home once they leave school or expecting them to bring money into the house
- Access to unhealthy sexual pressures i.e porn, unhealthy relationships, exploitation
- Body image issues, made worse by online world, social media, peer pressure
- Risk taking behaviours i.e. sexual activity, substance use, criminal activities, gaming addictions, self harm
- Parental poor mental health/substance abuse
- Caring responsibilities in the home (parents and siblings)

All of these impact on their ability to access school education positively and then also to maintain education, employment or training once they have left school aged 16. YEWs help support young people to deal with these issues, provide information and advice, signpost and support to access to specialist services, undertake the practical duties that a parent should do but can't or won't in many cases. Examples of this include, supporting them to access benefits, sexual health services, applying for college/work, getting to school for important events such as exams, helping them access funding for bus fares to college, taking them to interviews, checking up on their welfare, ensuring they have adequate food and clothing. These are some of the things that YEWs help young people with as either ongoing support or at crisis point.

Until these things are better for a young person then they cannot successfully engage in EET which then creates a future problem for society, families and most importantly the young person themselves. Therefore without the YEW support we shall have more young people 'falling through the net' and potentially costing more in terms of social care, housing, benefits, mental health services and loss of revenue in terms of unemployment.

Why YEWs are unique

- Specialist knowledge around adolescents as opposed to children/parents (different to Family Service, Education Welfare)
- Solution-focused approach
- Lots of face to face contact with young people (including physically taking them places in order to achieve the outcomes)
- Will undertake practical tasks **with** young people until they are ready to undertake them on their own or we have taught them how to do things i.e. access services, complete paperwork, undertake voluntary work, get their voice heard appropriately
- Are 'holistic' in our approach – will talk about and try and help with **whatever** the issue is, even if it doesn't immediately relate to EET – this builds trust, shows we listen to young people and earns us credibility with them for the future.
- Have knowledge, information about a range of things and know how to present this to young people in a way which makes sense to them (engagement skills)
- Are a source of information about young people opportunities to our colleagues

Youth Engagement Team Proposal

Youth Engagement Workers should work with young people who fit these descriptors:

- Yr 11 who are not engaging positively with school (i.e. truanting , persistent exclusions, out of mainstream education) as these are the young people who are most likely to end up NEET post 16 if we don't intervene and attempt a successful transition
- Young people who are NEET (post 16) and have other vulnerabilities and no identified other support i.e. living independently or homeless, domestic violence relationships,

- Young people who are in education but are very at risk of losing their placement without some additional support (info from colleges, previous school knowledge, those worked with in Yr11)
- Young people on CIN , LAC or CP plans where there is a specific role identified for YEW that is not/cannot be met by other professionals i.e. social worker, school pastoral, young carers, TAMHs, foster carer
- Any young person aged 14-17years who is engaging in risk taking behaviours i.e. exploitation of any kind, criminal activity (alongside YOT if they can't meet their needs or if they haven't been given an order), young people who are being highlighted to FCP but who don't meet threshold for CIN

Traded work should be

- Young people in Yrs 7-10 who school feel needs extra welfare support and who don't meet social care threshold (preventative work/early interventions)
- Young people in alternative education
- Careers guidance, running groups, anything else that a school would want to pay us for!

YEWs should not work with

- Post 16NEETs with no obvious vulnerabilities who chose not to engage – can be 'tracked' by unknowns coordinator monthly and if they want support then can caseload to a YEW. Could also invite them to 'job club' drop-ins at libraries so they have an 'offer' of support and then if they turn up they can be case loaded. These can be delivered on a rota and are not labour intensive as if young people don't turn up then other work can be done but provide a 'point of access' for young people to seek support. A link for parents who are able/want to help should be provided – a YEW they can speak to for info/advice about opportunities available for their young person.
- NEET young people who have another worker who they see regularly who could reasonably help them get into education, employment or training. For example, foster carer, YOT worker, Personal Advisor, social worker, U Turn worker – we can offer advice/support/information to these people so they can provide the young person with up to date info, however this avoids the young person having to meet with more people/build new relationships. If this relationship is poor or compromises other work then can refer to a YEW for additional support.

In summary

- I believe that there are enough young people to meet my above criteria to retain all YEWs or at the least to go to option 1. This is on basis of YEWs having a caseload of 20 vulnerable young people (I believe any higher than this and the quality of the work diminishes and that is a false economy as the young people keep bouncing back)

- I believe that these are best served in locality teams with a senior worker (who also holds a reduced caseload) overseeing the referrals/work
- I believe there is also a role for a senior worker to develop good practice, staff training, manage our data reporting, compile feedback and reports and ensure YEWs have a voice on sub-groups/LSCB etc.
- If we are to work to a model of less than 16 YEWs then I believe we need to choose between supporting post 16 NEETs and young people still of school age who are likely to become NEET/or social care referrals. I don't believe that we could do both to any kind of quality. It would be better to focus on one set of criteria and do it well (achieve the desired outcomes).

Appendix B

YEW consultation thoughts/views

Proposal :-

No changes to YEW service.

YEW's are a highly experienced, well qualified team who have delivered a wide range of outcomes for hard to engage and vulnerable young people and their families, including over 50% of the Troubled Families claims. Outcomes achieved include young people gaining employment, having successful transitions into yr 12 and reporting improved emotional health and reduced risk of criminal and sexual exploitation; "I know more about keeping safe online" (A.C age 14) . Therefore reducing the pressure on already stretched tier one services.

Recent changes including from schools to Academies and an increased 'business' focus in colleges is already indicating larger numbers of young people being excluded and refused a place at college. In addition, without an Education and Health Care Plan our most vulnerable learners will not be funded in placements after leaving school, again increasing the number of NEET young people in Swindon.

Often these increasing numbers of NEET young people are not entitled to any other support or working with any other professionals and therefore without the YEW service associated vulnerabilities with being NEET (isolation, poverty, mental health problems, family breakdown, ASB, teenage pregnancy) will escalate impacting on the young peoples' life chances and on other critical services.

Mental Health - YEW's are providing flexible and longer term tier two mental health interventions and unlike other mental health interventions YEW's can offer longer term and more creative approaches as we are not as restricted. This allows more scope for hard to engage young people to access much needed support before their situation escalates into a crisis and risks are increased. YEW's are often working with young people to address debilitating anxiety or anger problems for example, which are preventing young people from accessing the Education or Health services they need. YEW's are in a good position therefore to refer and assess as required, supporting more targeted mental health services. Removal or reduction of the YEW service would mean further pressure on limited mental health services.

YEW's have been in high demand to support work and deliver on targeted programmes and projects including Troubled Families, OPAL, Leaving Care, Schools, and YOT. Rather than seconding YEW's out to deliver this work specialist YEW's remaining in the YEW team and delivering from within would increase the resource and flexibility to respond to these specific targets. Often successful outcomes for the young people are due to an existing good relationship with a YEW or knowledge of a YEW, along with the YEW's

thorough local knowledge, so all young people could be allocated and supported more effectively across the service.

Development of traded services – there is scope to develop the YEW traded offer, trading with PRU has been a big success and has increased due to achieving successful outcomes. Opportunities could be explored with secondary schools, primary schools, colleges, tuition services, etc. Specifically with children and young people (and their families) at risk of exclusion, or disengaging and in the post 16 transition.

The YEW structure would require three seniors; two team leaders one in North and one South, remaining within locality teams to continue to benefit from locality working and local knowledge, the third to focus on Professional Lead responsibilities, Service development and referrals which would allow a single point of entry / access to the service, with all three seniors to remain case holders and continuing to maintain a high percent of face to face time.

Safeguarding / Edge of Care

Many YEW cases would be open to social care if the YE work wasn't happening; the work is both protective and preventative, and there are also cases which are co worked with Social Workers to allow for swifter, more coordinated and comprehensive interventions with young people which would not be possible with limited Social Work resources alone, therefore reducing the time Young people are on plans with Social Care. This prevents escalation of risk – CP & CIN cases have been stepped down as YEW was involved as this involvement is a key protective factor and link into children's services.

Ongoing issues with agency Social Workers and high staff turnover in Social Care can often mean the YEW is the only constant professional relationship the young person / family have, this consistent relationship has been beneficial to re engaging young people and families with new / Agency Social Workers.

Case Studies:-

S.W. male age 17 Yr 12

Context; S presented as Homeless because he was living in a tent / sleeping rough. SBC called mum who said he could go home and so he was not assessed as homeless. S did not feel he could go home due to his (previously single) mum's new partner who was abusive to mum – S tried to defend his mum and fought with him, mum chose the boyfriend.

S was work flowed to me because he was NEET, and it was suggested mediation with mum to prevent further relationship breakdown.

YEW Intervention; Mediation was not an option as S and mum felt at that time the relationship was too strained as mum was still in a relationship with her partner.

S and I met weekly, I referred him to Radnor Lodge and The Foyer, supported his college application and enrolment process, facilitated his benefit claim, communicated / updated mum. The Foyer initially refused him and so then I needed to advocate for Sam and challenge their decision making processes, after a few weeks he was offered a room in The Foyer.

He continued to experience a few things that were cause for concern, he found it difficult to engage with The Foyer staff so I mediated for a while, he was also without money for several weeks so he needed food bank vouchers and college finance applications completing. S was very overwhelmed by the aspects of independent living; he was naïve and inexperienced and needed support.

Once his room was secure at The Foyer, his benefits were coming in and he was working well with the Foyer and Swindon College I could close my involvement. If it wasn't for the YEW service S wouldn't have had any support at all to put these essential things into place.

Factors that contributed to success

- Young Person friendly methodology; I communicated with Sam via Facebook, met him in town and met him in places and at times that were meeting his needs i.e., McDonalds, evenings / weekends.
- Listened to his views, gave him time and space to tell his story from his perspective.
- Proactive communication with members of staff from key agencies, including sometimes challenging their decision making.

S.N Female age 17 yr 12

Context; S was a Stratton education student, NEET after leaving school, a high risk of CSE, CIN. S was known to me through traded time at Stratton Ed PRU and also was within my locality, so remained an open involvement due to NEET status and risk taking behaviour. There were many risks around S for many months, meeting older males online, drugs and alcohol, mum has mental health and alcohol problems, dad was convicted for abuse of mum, history of offending. Strategy discussions and social work interventions were in place, However S had at least 3 social workers in that time.

S self-confidence was very low and her sense of self-worth was a major concern. S was a very low level learner, with limited achievements.

YEW interventions;

Sexual Health Clinic Appointments.

Weekly / fortnightly sessions with S included Teen Talk activities around risk and resilience, activities to promote self-esteem, healthy relationships, sexual health, and Education around drugs and alcohol including facilitated conversations with specialist workers and Nurses. Positive activities including a day at riding stables, girls pamper day and a trip to a theme park. These interventions were planned so S could believe in herself, value herself and talk over her experiences and worries and build confidence and strategies to reduce the risks in her life.

S got to a place where she could be referred to an entry level course, and so was referred to 'Get Going at Greatwood Stables'; S was referred to a course at a Stables as horses were her passion, this was for five Mondays. To engage with this course S needed a lot of support, including a lift every day and meeting afterwards and support her on assessment day. From this she achieved an Entry Level 2 Award in assisting with basic care of horses

CV writing, how to use email with attachments etc., how to look for vacancies; use the internet for job searching etc.

Referred to Princes Trust Get into Retail programme, which she grew in confidence and was offered 4 weeks work experience with M&S, which led to a temporary Christmas job.

Factors that contributed to success

- Historical, positive relationship, only constant professional.
- Allowed time for the interventions when there is no quick fix – S was NEET for over a year
- Worked in partnership with Clinic and Nurses to facilitate YP engagement.
- At key moment gave the case lots of time.
- Knowledge of appropriate, alternative options for EET for vulnerable learners.

Parent of another young person– “Without this meeting I would NOT have known or taken any action to even think about College. I thought this was not an option for us. I have since been sent an application form for New College by [YEW]. [YEW] explained what I needed to do and who I would need to speak with. .. I cannot stress enough how this meeting has been life changing. It has given my son and I hope for the future. I was informed thoroughly of our rights to education even with a disability. [Worker] and [YEW] explained everything to me

and made sure I understood. They asked whether I had questions. I left the meeting feeling confident positive and overjoyed by all that was said.”

Parent – “I am really appreciative of your working with my son. 10 out of 10. You helped D go to clinic before things happened with his girlfriend. Only sad it’s coming to an end because D trusts you.”

Young person – “Whenever I needed to talk about what upset me, [YEW] would always listen and respond accordingly and make me feel better. You helped me get through [court] and not feel so alone. [What changed was] My sexual health knowledge. My relationship stance. My knowledge of how the world works. If we hadn’t worked together I would be an angry person. Thank you for all that you did and who'd have thought it for me.”

Young Person – “When I first started with [YEW] I did not go to college and had no idea how to apply for a job. Now I have a job after only 3 months. She is and amazing work[er] and understands everything.”

Appendix C

Youth Engagement Consultation – partner agencies collated feedback – November 2016

1. Context – importance of the roles to support education, employment and training.

Council Priority 2 - Right Skills, right Jobs in the right Place highlights the importance of young people having access to education, employment and training (EET) and to young people being able to compete for jobs in Swindon and provide a pipeline of future skills. This is due to the positive impact it has on other aspects of their lives, providing a very important resilience factor. EET work also has a significant contribution to priority 4, 'Help people to help themselves while always protecting the most vulnerable children and adults'. Ensuring young people and adults are able to access EET, will ensure there is reduced dependency and reduce our costs.

The Skills and Employment Strategy outlines our priority to reduce the number of young people 'not in education, employment and training', to ensure that young people get the support needed to progress into further education, training and work. This comes under the theme 'Skills for Inclusion', ensuring our young people at risk of being disadvantaged in the labour market are able to progress.

The Council also has specific statutory duties to be aware of the education employment and training status of all 16 and 17 year olds (tracking) and to provide support for those with are NEET (Refer Appendix 1).

Quarterly and annual data on the number of young people NEET/Unknown and those participating in learning is reported to the DfE and published on a quarterly basis with a new NEET 'Scorecard' introduced in 2016 summarising annual data.

The overall responsibility for the NEET Strategy sits with the 'Routes to Employment' team, part of Economy, Regeneration and Skills' The Youth Engagement Service has responsibility for ensuring those NEET or at risk of NEET are able to progress to education, employment and training and to 'track' young people age 16/17 to confirm their EET status.

The service is the key front line service working with young people on education, employment and training. The service also provides the expertise within Children's Services to engage young people in education, employment and training.

The education, employment and training agenda and having the expertise within Children's Services to support our other statutory duties linked to safeguarding is an important element of our workforce. Providing specialist EET advise to youth offending and care leavers teams is important for the teams to achieve their outcomes, This is due to the positive impact that EET has on the other aspects of young people's lives, providing a very important resilience factor.

2. Specific feedback on the consultation document and proposals.

We support the information in the consultation paper re the importance of a workforce with EET expertise and the impact that the service is currently achieving.

We would support the reduction in the team of 4.4 fte with a saving of £136.4K.

The option to reduce the team by 8 fte will significantly reduce the intervention work with 14-17 year olds and with Troubled families, hence reducing the impact on those at risk of NEET. We would not support this.

We would not support the other options as it will have a significant impact on the overall expertise within Children's Services to improve EET outcomes.

Before considering options 2,3 or 4, we would like to see a wider piece of work outlining the options to develop expertise re-education, employment and training in the children's workforce and how this work could be linked across children and adults, for example to address the SEND agenda, outcomes for Care Leavers and adults with learning disabilities.

The risk to the Council in implementing option 3 or 4 is increased numbers of NEET young people and potentially unemployed adults placing an increasing financial burden on the Council budget.

If the YEW service is not able to deliver the statutory duties of the LA in relation to 16/17 year olds NEET, we need to consider how Children's Services would be able to meet this duty in other ways. Are we suggesting that the Council would not fulfil this duty?

Statutory responsibility

Swindon Borough Council has a number of statutory duties relevant to the work of the Youth Engagement Service, summarised in the Department for Education document "Participation of young people in education, employment or training, statutory guidance for local authorities, September 2016". The duties which are directly supported by Youth Engagement Workers are:

- Local authorities are required to collect information about all young people so that those who are not participating, or are NEET, can be identified and given support to re-engage
- Local authorities must promote the effective participation in education and training of 16 and 17 year olds in their area with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training
- Local authorities must make arrangements - ie maintain a tracking system – to identify 16 and 17 year olds who are not participating in education or training. Putting in place robust arrangements to identify young people who are not engaged in education or training or who have left provision enables local authorities to offer support as soon as possible

Which national comparison is made, our "in learning" and "NEET plus Unknown" figures place us comfortably in the top quartile of English Local Authorities.

Strategic Commissioner

SBC Routes to Employment

Having read the consultation document, the least harmful option for the vulnerable students in my care is Option 1.

But I think there is a more opportune way of restructuring the YEWs.

The YEWs provide an important service for the students within EOTAS in the following areas:

- Engagement with education
- Building resilience
- Restorative work with parents
- Emotion coaching
- CSE prevention/reduction
- Substance use prevention/reduction
- IAG and transitions to post-16 settings
- PSHE delivery
- Mentoring/building confidence
- Advocacy during crises such as conviction, sentencing and domestic abuse

There are a number of timely questions to ask as part of this consultation:

- Transition to post-16: with 500k of resource being withdrawn from the support of students with non-formalised but complex needs, this cohort will fall to YEWs. How will reduced YEW FTE address this without the number of NEETs spiking? (See October's Schools Forum minutes where this removal of support was agreed).
- CAMHS Transformation: Vulnerable students within EOTAS (a) do not thrive during long waits for appointments and (b) do not easily travel or engage with strangers however qualified they are. The students have the need, the YEWs have the relationship and the trust, CAMHS has the "gateway" to higher tier intervention. Would not redeploying the YEWs as CAMHS outreach transform the effectiveness of the CAMHS service and draw on some of the £1.2 billion of CCG/Health money committed to this area over the next ten years? (See the Streetlab/Mindlab approach piloted in London).
- Outcomes for CiC: Research shows that the turning point for CiC is one trusting relationship with an adult. YEWs represent this - not just for CiC - but for the wider cohort who have insecure care within the family home. The reduction of so many anti-social and anti-cohesive behaviours stems from a legacy of unmet need: criminality; CSE; criminal exploitation; substance use; flight; youth violence; domestic abuse (as perpetrator) etc. How will reduced YEW FTE address this without the number of incidences spiking and the resultant pressure on other services increasing?
- Pastoral Support in schools: Due to financial pressures schools are cutting their pastoral staff. However, the students who would normally receive their support remain. This leads to higher rates of exodus of these students through exclusion, EHE or in-year transfer.

Schools can no longer afford to be the employer of such staff with all the associated costs, but would buy the time of such staff to work with specific students. Are not the YEWs uniquely placed to fulfil such roles?

In short, the YEWs represent a mobile, flexible, multi-skilled and relevant team who can effect real change in the lives of young people; the paramedics of mental health and youth engagement if you will. I would recommend auditing where their skills support the KPIs of other teams and for any restructure to be in this wider context. Thinking within silos will only lead to another consultation when the next financial pressure comes or when the client profile changes and will ultimately be less effective and more expensive.

Please do consider this response carefully. I think there are some important “one time only” opportunities here.

Ben Slater,

Head of EOTAS Swindon

YEW is able to offer another positive dynamic to the relationship with the YP that perhaps a YP or family who may struggle with Children service/social worker involvement. The social workers and social care workers in this team, has found YEW skills/knowledge in relation to the education field invaluable. They have positive relationships links for young people that struggle to engage with other services, alongside this a vast amount of knowledge. Their loss would impact on the work load of social workers who would then need to pick up this area of expertise, although social workers are not always accepted by the YP family as their remit for involvement can be much more complex. The young people would not receive the in-depth support they require as other professionals involved are not able to offer the level of time and support provided by the YEW. One worker stated that she had with a YP who was receiving education via the hospital with the support from their YEW, without this they would not have been able to complete their education and sit their exams.

Theveshyra Fletcher (Mrs)

Team Manager

Social Work South Team

I just wanted to give the consultation some feedback to support your team in this challenging time.

The Community Health & Wellbeing team formally Leisure and the Street Games project has work incredibly closely with colleagues in Youth Engagement Services for the last 3 years. The expertise of you staff and the role of a YEW have offered vital support to our service and the young people involved.

This includes the two weekly girls group sessions which we run together in partnership at Youth First and the Underground on a weekly bases. With the staffing reductions you face and the closures of the Youth Centres I am aware that this will have a huge impact on the groups. Our service can currently commit to the partnership work until at least December 17, by providing an externally funded Youth Activator, who currently works side by side with the Youth Engagement workers to facilitate this work.

The groups are a platform for other statutory services including, Youth Offending, the Police, Education and Health professionals and I do believe there is room to expand to other statutory services. As you are aware group work has a huge amount of benefits, that 1-2-1 work simply cannot compare with and the best setting for these groups is the Youth Centre. Therefore I would like to encourage that access to these centres for the groups is considered, when this work has been facilitated in community spaces in previous years the limited availability/ resources and rules and regulations of the venue have had a detrimental effect on work being carried out.

My concern as I am sure yours is, is that a reduction in YEWs will leave young people with high end vulnerabilities with limited support (if any at all), the skills and expertise of a YEW is something that takes years to develop and requires will, determination and passion and unfortunately I am not sure other sectors are equipped to pick this work up.

I wish you and your staff all the best at this challenging time; I appreciate the austerity you face.

Charlie Paradise

Volunteering & Involvement Officer

Community Health & Wellbeing

I am writing to give views the YEW service consultation.

In school we frequently contact social services desperate for some help for families and all too often when it does not meet threshold they suggest Early Help.

Early Help is great and it allows us to focus on needs and for school to really understand the issues but when the issues are around home we are very limited in school as to the kind of support we can give.

We rely on services like YEW, Educational welfare, and PSA because we cannot do that home and parent mentoring that is needed and nor can we offer the kind of support to young people in the home.

I have seen the benefits and impact on many students who have YEWs. Adults from different agencies advising young people and giving the same message are really important. YEWs can have a different style with young people than teachers and sometimes that is what is needed to get through to these young people. YEWs can meet young people in their homes and outside of school in social informal sessions which put them at ease and allow them to talk more easily. The impact of reducing and removing the service would mean many young people missing out on that mentoring support and potentially lead to further attendance issues or substance abuse or social issues that we refer so many young children for and long term this would worsen

Currently the needs of young people beyond the school setting are ever increasing and the funding is doing the opposite. If Local authorities and the DFE want schools to be successful in Swindon then they have to maintain the support services we, young people and their families rely on.

I am copying our entire House team and SMT on this email and know that they will all agree with this view that Swindon needs its Youth Engagement Workers and hope that this can be added to the other comments during this consultation period.

Louise Forrester

Assistant Head & Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Commonweal School

My experience of working to support children and young people to access and remain in education over a number of years has always been supported by colleague Youth Engagement Workers.

Over the years I have witnessed significant impact of the work of YEW's in supporting families with the outcome of pupils returning to education and finding a pathway to post 16 provision.

There is a significant amount of experience within the team and any reduction in service will leave a gap in provision which is challenging particularly in light of the major expansion of the Swindon population over the next few years.

The work of YEW's in supporting vulnerable young people and families has saved the Council a great deal of money in terms of preventing some young people moving down a negative path and ultimately having to be placed outside Swindon at significant cost or having to be supported through the criminal justice system.

For all of these reasons and more I would wish to support the least invasive option. This would provide a base from which to develop further in years to come.

Nigel Pickering

Additional Provision and Reintegration Manager

The Youth Engagement service in Swindon has embraced the Collaborative working ethic promoted by the SEND reforms brought in Sept 2014. The individuals that work for this service are very knowledgeable and highly approachable.

In the last 12 months the Independent Support Service has worked with the YE service to support 10 vulnerable young people who without the YE service would be at home, not in work or education.

Most referrals to our service come through education settings or direct from parents.

The YE service has access to the YP people in Swindon who need support the most and without YE we would not be aware of them.

To date 6 of these young people now have an Education, Health and Care Plan and are back in an educational setting.

The remaining 4 continue to be supported by both services to work towards their aspirations

Colette O'Sullivan

Swindon Advocacy Movement

The Youth Engagement Service has enabled TIPS and I to have access to skills and knowledge of Youth Engagement Workers who have been invaluable to us because of their local knowledge, relationship and experience of local statutory agencies, schools, colleges, and providers in education, justice, employment, health and housing. A key aspect in all of this is the continuity - they are reliable, informed and not agency/cover/bank staff, therefore remaining a quality beacon in their area of operation.

They provide clarity of a young person's needs to date, with effective introductions without excessive time spent by us to search and research for young peoples' stories and experiences or putting young people through repetitive processes. In addition, we are provided with signposting of other services locally, which can change, arrive or close without our knowledge.

The immediate impact on our service of a reduction or loss of Youth Engagement would be:

- a significant reduction in accessing NEET individuals who can be helped and engaged in education/employment
- relevant information on those we will be seeing
- absence of advice and signposting locally
- absence of joint enterprise with particularly difficult individuals and families
- a bringing together of agencies and professionals who can effectively help a wide range of young people

The long-term impact of reduction/loss of Youth Engagement would be a significant increase in NEET and a loss of specialisation and input for young people at the front end of need; parents/carers, council, schools, colleges, providers, statutory and independent agencies losing a key resource to assist these groups. It would take away the 'holding together' of a large number high needs individuals with the necessary agencies.

Youth Engagement Service has been the main driver in preventing out of county placements and building a local combination of provision, thus reducing costs. Further, it has regularly de-escalated problems that may emerge in colleges and providers with high needs young people who challenge providers with their issues and learning needs.

Without this robust service costs are likely to increase because of a lack of a unified approach promoted by this service.

Dr Gerald Lombard, C.Psychol., C.Sci., AFBPsS

Consultant Chartered Psychologist

Director, TIPS

I have a very disengaged young female that has created a positive relationship with her YEW and as such she has attended the girls group which has enabled her to develop her own social confidence. More important to this is the relationship has allowed this young person to change her views of the professionals involved in her life from her education to children's services. Without this high level of interaction and support I would not be able to consider closing this case as it would not have progressed at the pace it has.

The YEW that has worked alongside myself has such a wide ranging level of knowledge but in particular the ability to support the young person in her education and how this process works and what else can be considered has enable the young person to engage in education so without this knowledge it is unlike she would have been able to explore all aspects of her education. This is just one of the many areas I have observed. What is evident is the personal skills that enable positive honest and open communication.

At a time when our young people have a restricted service this is one service that needs to expand to reach out to more of our young people. You only have to speak with them to see the benefits they gain from having a YEW. To lose a service like this would demonstrate to the young people who trust these professionals that they are not important and they do not have a voice. Without services such as this the burden of support is greatly reduced and this will increase the chances of children and young people slipping through the net and not fulfilling their potential and going on to have meaningful lives.

Without the engagement of the YEW my young person would not be as engaged in her education she would not have attended other appointments and as such would have remained subject to a CP plan and further additional support would have been required. Due to the support the young person reduced her risky behaviours that were identified and this has prevented further support from partner agencies.

In my professional opinion reducing or closing such a service will create further costs now and in the long term the knock on effect for social workers alone will put even more strain on an already stretched service. This will mean the young people will not get a service they require to meet the needs they have been able to explore with the workers. The level s of distrust in adults and professionals will increase and rather than engaging the young people in meaningful activities they will then have nothing to do and this can lead to anti-social behaviour.

Stewart Pettitt

Social Worker

Social Work Team North

The YEW service is integral to our student' progress – the YEW expands a young person's life experiences when they are at their most vulnerable e.g. by taking them out of the house/to activities/supporting them at professionals meeting (CAMHS/ TAC etc). The YEW team gently breaks the cycle of isolation at home and de-escalates fear of re-engaging with life's opportunities

The YEWs offer repeated visits to the young person's **home**. They develop relationships of trust with the young person and their family. They have explicit and essential experience in understanding and unpicking the complex issues facing the young person. They are an advocate and "voice" for those who find it difficult to be heard.

The YEW offer bespoke Post 16 advice, they accompany young people to post 16 places of learning in order to ensure that they will be able to sustain a planned post 16 placement that has considered ALL their needs

The YEW have positive and collaborative relationships with a vast range of professionals. The key to preventative work is RELATIONSHIPS

The immediate impact of a reduction or loss of service would be:

- Increase of numbers of NEET young people in Swindon
- Loss of network of relationships leading to breakdown in young people's re-engagement.

The long term impact of a reduction/loss of service - more money spent on crisis management as the YEWs are not there do input preventative/de-escalation work

Lys Kirby

Head of Centre

Hospital and Home Education Service, EOTAS

My experience has been very positive with all YEW's that have been supporting our students. We have had the most disaffected youngsters engage with YEW's which has led to

positive change and development for that young person. One student I have in mind would have been NEET if it wasn't for the hard work and determination in getting alongside the youngster to show them that they are not worthless and have the skills to become successful in life and to support them with applications etc.

I have always found YEW's to be flexible and will try any means to engage with our youngsters, accommodating where, when and what they do to engage with them and not giving up because the first one or two visits were not successful. They always feedback to the school to what they have achieved or working towards, support the school to engage with families or collaboratively to complete the Early Help Record so that it has the views of all the family. They take on the role of mentor, social worker and family support worker and advocate, their skills are endless and they can provide the support more intensely than many services available in Swindon. For example there are some youngsters who meet with their Social Workers every 6 weeks and find it tricky to build a relationship with that adult yet a YEW is visiting them weekly building up that positive, safe and secure relationship which effectively leads to a positive outcome.

I find that parents are more engaging with the YEW as they do not see them as a threat and are more approachable, using language that the parents understand. They are useful to help build relationships between home and school if there parents have become disengaged. They are advocates for the youngsters during meetings where the young person's voice needs to be heard or views shared. They are able to do the preventative work with the youngsters and families to help sign post them to other services or to prevent Social Care involvement or things escalating.

There is a lack of services in Swindon for Secondary age students so taking away a vital resource would be detrimental to the young people. Sadly, there are many youngsters who do not have adults outside of school that they can share their worries with and be open and honest and taking away this service would leave youngsters vulnerable and isolated. Our students talk positively about their time with YEW's and enjoy the contact with an adult who is positive and believes in them. We have many youngsters who have mental health difficulties who will not engage with TaMHS or CaMHS but will engage with a YEW, they have someone who will listen to them and give them advice and support. All services are already at full capacity so reducing a vital service such as YEW will be detrimental to all young people in need of additional support.

If anything, there needs to be more funding made available and for this service to include all Secondary age youngsters 11 - 18 so many more can access this support. SBC will otherwise be accountable for youngsters who are out of work, education and employment and who lack self-esteem, confidence and the skills to be a positive member of their community.

Becky Lewis

Designated Safeguarding Lead

St Luke's School

I am a social worker in the Central South Social Work Team based in Reuben George in Swindon. The Youth Engagement Workers are invaluable to mine and the other social workers work with young people. They offer a unique and versatile service that fills the gap between universal services and social care. YEW's are able to build quality relationships with the young people they work with, and tackle some of the most challenging issues surrounding young people such as sex, substance misuse, family breakdown, CSE and young people who are NEET. YEW's are also essential in safeguarding young people, and being a key part of child protection plans and core groups.

I have worked very closely with Lindsay Poole with two different young people. She has been able to maintain contact and relationships with young people who are disengaged from social workers and social care and ensure these young people are regularly sighted by professionals.

Lindsay has been invaluable in providing one young person ongoing support during a number of difficult times including, CSE, pregnancy and miscarriage, being in care, domestic abusive relationships, working co-operatively with the police, etc. I genuinely do not feel that in my role as this young person's social worker, I would not have the capacity, nor the positive relationship with this young person to have tackled these issues as well.

Lindsay has been able to act as a mediator between the police and a young person to enable the young person to give evidence and make police statements, which subsequently led to arrests of adult males committing crimes regarding CSE.

Lindsay maintains regular contact with me, along with the young people's families, their foster carers, and other professionals. She is a key link in the young person's core group of professionals working with her, and key in ensuring information is passed on to professionals as and when is necessary.

All of the YEW's I have worked with in Swindon have excellent knowledge and experience in working with young people and teenagers. They hold a wealth of information regarding education, employment, training, supported housing, drugs, alcohol, and many other aspects of a teenagers lives. Having the YEW's sitting in our office means I am able to access their knowledge and experience which otherwise I may not have access to.

I believe Lindsay has been vital in stopping certain situations from escalating, for example she has supported one young person to engage in sexual health and contraception, preventing the young person getting pregnant or catching an infection.

Lindsay has been this young person's consistent adult in her life. The young person does not have this from anyone else in her family, and I do not believe that in my role as a social worker I would have the time and capacity to do what Lindsay does.

If the YEW service was to be reduced or lost, I would have serious concerns of the welfare of some young people in Swindon. Young people would lose what is potentially their only adult relationship, a role model, and a supportive person. Young people in Swindon would be deprived of all the great aspects to the YEW service I have mentioned above.

I worry that to remove this vital service would lead to more children and young people being escalated to social care services, which will cost the Local Authority further funding, and lead

to an overload of social care services and an overall decrease in the quantity and quality of services that young people receive.

I hope that summarises my views, please do ask if you require any further information, or more detail. (I know that if I was to look at one young person's chronology I would be able to point out dozens of key events in her life where Lindsay has been vital in keeping her safe/protecting her/supporting her).

Hannah Simmonds

Social Worker

Central South Team

I believe that the youth engagement team offer a different approach to our social work and YOT teams in that the relationship YEW's build and develop with young people is genuinely voluntary, and that the current YEW's bring a unique range of skills that simply don't exist in any real capacity in other teams.

I don't have hard evidence that I am able to offer but you no doubt will be basing decisions on evidence and data that is available within children's services. I would suggest that there will have been significant numbers of young people that would have entered the care system without a relationship built with a YEW, often in an open access youth setting or through a referral from a concerned education provider or partner agency. Without this resource being available I am concerned where young people will be able to build similar positive relationships.

From a personal standpoint, at a time when the Family Service is being created and developed it had been with some optimism that I viewed working more closely again with the YEW's. I feel the mix of YEW skills, experience and knowledge and the skills of family workers give us the opportunity to collectively ensure the reduction in the number of teenagers coming into care through quick and appropriate intervention at an early enough stage, and in cases where we have failed to be able to avoid care the opportunity of quicker and more effective plans family plans that enable us to step down to early help support and eventually 'case closure'.

I'm sure I am one of a number expressing views similar to those above but I do sincerely hope that you are able to retain as much of the existing YEW services as possible.

David Attree

Family Service Co-ordinator

Children, Families and Community Health

The support that the YEW team provide is invaluable in terms of improving the outcomes of young people. At the point of referral the future can appear quite bleak with permanent exclusion, becoming NEET, going into care, becoming homeless, poor mental health, substance dependency looking like real possibilities. Frequently the referrals are made for very vulnerable young people who are at serious risk of harm. Parents and other agencies frequently feel at a loss of the best way forward to support the young person. One of the great strengths that the YEW team has is the fact that they are independent from school and home and they are uniquely placed to offer support. Referrals that I have made have resulted in 100% success rate in terms of the YEW being able to engage with the young person. Being able to engage with young people and gain their trust is the first step in helping them become receptive to finding positive solutions to the difficulties they are facing.

The YEW team are highly effective at communicating with other agencies and parents to help resolve issues. They have a huge bank of knowledge and a wealth of experience in terms of the options available to support young people. They are hugely committed to their roles and appear to routinely go above and beyond with the support they provide.

If the service was lost I have no doubt this would have a direct impact on exclusion rates, number of students becoming NEET, breakdown of relationships within the family and the number of vulnerable young people putting themselves at risk.

Ruth Chivers

Parent Support Advisor

St Josephs Catholic College

I have just heard that the Youth Engagement Team in Swindon is currently in consultation. If I may, I would really like to put in a good word for the team.

For the past two years, Priory College has worked very closely with Debbie Hing, who is the YEW for one of our local students. Without Debbie's input, the young person concerned would not be engaged in education, as she is today. Debbie has been pivotal to the current success of the placement; acting as a 'go-between', a co-ordinator, an emotional support to mum, a motivator to the young person, a source of information – and much more!!

I have not come into contact with another professional who offers such a creative and flexible approach to young people with autism spectrum conditions and their families.

I hope others are voicing their concern about the possible demise/restructure of such a valuable service.

Sally Grubb

Head of Learning and Student Support

Priory College Swindon

It would be such a shame if there are cutbacks relating to the Youth Engagement Service.

At Churchfields we have referred students on to this service and have always valued the support received.

This is a service that stands alone from the mainstream school setting and home. It is not bound by the same degree of confidentiality that schools are and therefore there is far more possibility that existing barriers can be overcome, trust developed and therefore helping to ensure that vulnerable young people are far less at risk of harm.

What is intended to replace it? Unless there is a careful rethink it is likely that there will be more and more pressure on schools to try to fill the gap in areas that we are not able to touch due to educational constraints.

We have always had a very good relationship with the Youth Engagement Team and recognise it as a very valuable service.

Irene Stollery

Student and Family Welfare Officer – Churchfields Academy

I am writing to express my support for the Swindon Youth Engagement support service. We have used the service very successfully to reengage a student in education. Without this service this particular student would now be in a very different position. I have found the service to have a real "can do" attitude, which is not always the case with external services. This service is shown in even better light when we look to services for our Wiltshire based students.

The loss or reduction of this service would have a large impact on the Swindon students of Royal Wootton Bassett Academy with very little alternative available.

David Storey

Teacher of Geography and Head of Year 11

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

I have worked with various Youth Engagement Workers over the past few years and find that their skills are wide and varied. YEWs are educated to degree level. They are conversant with the various agencies and their provision within the integrated locality teams. YEWs have the ability to engage with the young person that maybe other service employees don't/can't. This may be because YEWs run various groups for young people in Swindon and in so doing get to know how that young person 'ticks' as it is easier to assess and support in a familiar and comfortable environment chosen by the young person. Youth

Engagement Workers connect not only with the young person but with the family and can be the early help assessor for needs within the family.

I find YEWs to be good 'doers'. They will put themselves out to ensure that they chose the key elements for a good meeting with the young person, so they can be relaxed and more likely to engage than meeting in a school or at home with parents/carers. YEWs can be that missing link between education and 'life' and enable that young person to be heard, supported and have a trusted person to enable them to continue with their education, training or work etc. I have some cases for Elective Home Education whereby some cases have a YEW involved. We have met with the young person and their respective families to draw up plans for the future for education, options for the future in training, work etc. I have found the knowledge that the YEW has about other education providers to be excellent. In my case the immediate impact might be that I cannot engage/ due to resources or relationships with the YP to move things on and find a solution to the problems with education, training etc. Both Swindon College and New College have students who are working well with YEWs.

Jenny Logan

Mary Donovan

Senior Education Welfare Officers

As both a resident and an employee of Swindon I am fully aware of the pressures our council is under in meeting the rising costs of social care and increasing demands on services throughout the borough. I am also aware of the need for a service to provide value for money whilst meeting the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

Over the years I have experienced an increasing demand for young people to access help and support whilst services have been cut for example the Connections Service which provided support for young people in accessing work, training and even simple things like writing C.V.s. From my experience young people still need to access a form of support to help them access some of the basic services available e.g. the job centre. At other times some young people are still falling through the proverbial net and becoming NEETs. It is for these most vulnerable and disaffected young people that support is essential to prevent them from becoming disengaged from society completely and therefore limiting what they see as their future options limiting themselves to crime or mental ill health and reducing their potential for their future.

I have worked at On Trak for 11 years during which time I have seen a number of changes to the Youth Work that Swindon has provided. In recent years Youth Engagement workers have brought young people along to our service for counselling to provide a more rounded approach to help them deal with some of the emotional trauma they have experienced to help them best cope in the world in which they live. Alongside this the youth engagement workers input on a practical level has been invaluable. At other times I have made a referral to the Youth Engagement Service in the hope of plugging a young person back into society.

Only yesterday I met with a young woman who has dropped out of college, she presented as very depressed and has lost contact with her peers. Her eating and sleeping patterns are poor. I will refer her to the Youth Engagement Service in the hope that they will make contact with her and find an area of interest so that she can start to reengage with peers, education or a training programme. It may be that she returns to college but undoubtedly she will need support to do this. In the meantime I can address her emotional distress and work on some of her anxieties. I am concerned that further cuts to an already stretched service will mean more young people will fall through that net which cannot benefit our local community in the long term.

I ask that any cost cutting decisions take on board the needs of those most vulnerable young people who often do not have a support network and will go onto become our next Swindon adults.

Kathy Kinloch
Counsellor
On Trak Youth Counselling

Their role has been valuable to young people giving them individual time and energy to work with on their specific needs.

I believe their skills are unique as they use techniques to work with the young people that enable the individual to feel, listen to and not got the statutory obligation that often young people fight against.

The loss of a valuable resource to front line staff is huge. When Youth Engagement Workers have been involved reduced/prolonged individuals coming into care, they have assisted with resolving family difficulties, worked along other agencies i.e. U-Turn, YOT as well as Children Services.

They are always available to offer advice, look at matters at different perspectives and assist practically at short notice when other services are not available. Individuals I have worked with within the YEW have been remarkable, valuable people that I have had pleasure

Veronica Crossley

Social Worker

Central North Team

They provide the last line in defence when keeping young people engaged with creating their futures. They support on a wide range of issues that otherwise would go undressed

They are used to dealing with young people on the margins of society that would otherwise be forgotten or left by the wayside.

Learners who would not engage within College would not engage with any other providers and the NEET rates would immediately begin to increase.

As with every cut in this type of service, we have seen a year on year reduction in support for young people. With the increase of NEETS and the lack of a support network it is likely to result in a rise in antisocial behaviour, untreated mental health conditions and a growing cohort of young people who are not work ready or skilled to move into the workplace.

A young lady with high anxiety issues was supported to come in to College for a meeting to discuss educational options. She was then accompanied on visits to the College to help acclimatise her to the noise and crowds. It was then planned for her YEW to visit her during the early days of College to ensure she was coping and helping her to deal with any wobbles.

Tanya Musty

Swindon College

Youth Engagement is an invaluable service for young people who are disengaged with school. The young people really benefit from having a supportive role model outside of school as often they are making poor decisions in relation to their behaviour or are putting themselves at risk. Often these young people feel as if they have given up on school and have lost all motivation – they see school as the opposition and something to be fought against. It is really helpful to have someone outside of school to complete work with them surrounding consequences and making good choices as this has not been engaged with or accepted from school itself. This reflects in student's behaviour in school and therefore enables them to make the best progress that they can, achieve their goals and go on to successful jobs.

YEW do specific work surrounding CSE, substance abuse, sexual health and keeping young people safe that we cannot provide in school.

They have knowledge of work experience, colleges, internships and will spend time exploring personalised future options with the young people. They can accompany young people to open days and events of which they would otherwise have no support and most likely not attend. Unfortunately in school students are limited to a short amount of time with the careers service (one appointment in year 11 unless the students attend a drop in which the disengaged students are very unlikely to attend out of choice).

- The YEW team have knowledge of all council services, groups and support available to young people.
- Knowledge of alternative curriculum and places of study

What would be the immediate impact of a reduction/loss of service? Worse behaviour in school, decrease in school attendance, disengagement from education, vulnerable students with no support leading to bad decision making.

What would be the long term impact of a reduction/loss of service? More students permanently excluded, more students placing themselves at risk – CSE, drugs, alcohol, teenage pregnancy, students out of education or not attending school.

In the 6 months I have worked at Churchfields, the students who have a YEW, behaviour and attendance have improved. Youth engagement workers have supported students in managed moves and PEX has been avoided. They have worked to make sure that students out of education receive the support required.

Hannah Wolfe, Churchfields Academy

I have found that the young residents here at Radnor Lodge have been greatly helped with the input from the youth engagement workers.

They spend time building up trust and confidence. I have especially noticed this when a resident has been in a low mood. They manage to somehow bond with hard to react clients. Encouraging positives, supporting in appointments if they are having difficulties, helping to keep them in education/training. I think at such an important time, this can have a huge impact for them going forward and not falling into habits of not working.

Sarah Higgins
Senior Project Worker - Radnor Lodge

I have worked with a number of YEW's over the years. The young people I have jointly worked with in the main have had special educational needs and often additional needs and complex difficulties. They have greatly valued someone to support them gaining employment or continuing their education beyond sixteen. They have in all the cases I have worked with created a context preventing them becoming NEET.

The skills and knowledge they possess is the ability to communicate to a young person difficult issues but are able to problem solve a solution with the young person and other professionals working with them. They have a better understanding of the systems that are in place for safeguarding and inclusion as well as equalities. Therefore in meeting priorities in the vision for vulnerable young people they are invaluable. If we are to meet for example Priority 4 Swindon would have to invent a team to do this invaluable work for this to be achieved. This and other priorities for young people would not be met without this service. This would be a long term impact and costly. The work they have managed has prevented some students attending out borough provision, secured employment and the ability to sustain and develop skills to be employable. The capacity to help young people to be safe from exploitation be this C.S.E. or gangs or ending up in the justice system or getting out of these situations and moving on because they have gained respect for themselves and others.

Ian Brewer

Educational Psychologist

YEW's help to bridge communication difficulties between adults and young people. Many of the teens I have referred to the YEW service are now engaging with their families in a positive way and are taking responsibility for the choices they make. This has been invaluable when a family are in crisis.

As far as I know there aren't any other youth services that work with young people in a group context. Teens need a safe place to socialise and the youth clubs are invaluable resources run by skilled and trained YEW's.

So many funding cuts have left families vulnerable and in crisis. Social Services are already struggling to cope with caseloads which have been exacerbated by cutting front line Early Intervention services. We will have more and more families and children in crisis. Many YEW's manage safeguarding at TAC level which in turn stops Social Care needing to be involved. If this service was to go, social care will have many more referrals at crisis point when it is almost too late.

The impact of losing the YEW's would be felt in Schools (in terms of more exclusions and safeguarding), TAHMS/CAMHS, social care, school nurses, Police, YOT, drug and alcohol services and many more. Young people will have little to no timely support from services as the waiting lists to access the services will continue to increase leaving more and more of our families vulnerable.

The relationship between staff at school and S was breaking down and she was often being excluded. At home, relationships between mother and daughter had completely broken down and S was taking drugs and drinking large amounts of alcohol and having unprotected sex resulting in two pregnancy scares. The YEW did lots of work with mum and S and school which resulted in S stopping drinking and taking drugs. S settled down at school and her grades and attendance improved. S started to look after her own physical, mental and sexual health. S and her mum's relationship is back on track now. So the direct impact of this YEW engagement was the police no longer need to be contacted anymore. Social Care aren't involved as there are no more safeguarding issues which means they won't have to consider foster care. S no longer needs to see the school counsellor which frees up space for another young person. S has had no further pregnancy scares, so she won't need to leave school, claim benefits and any teen parent agencies. S doesn't need to access a drug and alcohol service which frees up a space for someone else. The involvement of the YEW has saved many thousands of pounds and resources over this time.

We cannot afford to lose any more of these vital services for children and young people. The impact is being felt in all remaining support services and staff just can't cope with the increased demand for their services.

Kara Nicholas

Education Welfare Officer

We work with particularly anxious young people who find it extremely hard to engage with education. Many have been NEET for some time. Without the continued involvement of YEWs, many would fail to engage with us. As with other education providers, we do not have the capacity to work intensively with students to address the reasons behind their non-attendance, and value immensely the partnership working of YEWs.

Many YEWs have a comprehensive understanding of local services and opportunities that might be open to their young people. YEWs are able to work with young people to support their mental health and wellbeing without the support being viewed overtly as mental health support. This is often a barrier for young people who do not wish to be viewed as needing mental health services. There seems to be far less knowledge on the part of mental health workers of the opportunities available to young people in general. The impact will be that opportunities are missed and the young people in question go unsupported, with a risk to an escalation in their condition.

We have a number of students with us at the moment who have required ongoing support of their YEW in order to continue to engage. This includes attendance at their monthly reviews and support with the therapeutic nature of their education. I can name individual YEWs who are working with specific young people who undoubtedly would very quickly escalate to requiring more costly interventions if their access to their YEW is removed.

Joanna Ridley

Interim Manager Swindon / SENCO

Catch22 Thames Valley (Swindon and Bracknell)

We have had the privilege of working alongside Youth Engagement for the last few years since the posts were created and Youth workers previous to that. I can't even to begin to express how important Professional, experienced Youth workers are for young people in our community. So many young people in our community feel disenfranchised and disconnected from their family. They rarely have friends they can trust with their deepest fears, hopes and worries nor any adults they can trust or relate to or have any understanding of their world. This is where Youth Engagement Workers in our community are so important by providing strategic, supportive, encouraging, on-going relationship with young people and helping them to thrive. As the voluntary sector we rely heavily on being able to refer or connect young people into this critical service.

By being focussed on the young person and having a key understanding of the challenges of the turbulence of adolescence as well as a key understanding of youth culture - which is so important - YEW's are able to provide a very focussed and appropriate service to the young person. All of the YEW's are trained to professional level with a very key set of skills to help young people thrive. It is a professional service with high standards and skills required to ensure young people achieve and they can thrive and are safe. Social workers are stretched and often non-specialists or inexperienced at the issues young people face; teachers are too busy and school support structures too stretched and therefore less able to provide an effective or efficient service to the young person which YEW's are able to. The voluntary sector - as good as we are - lacks the professional standards and support that the Council currently bring.

We find it very hard to respond to this as we don't want to even think through the impact of the loss of this service as it is so important and the YEW team in place are so good at their jobs. As it is recent cuts and redistribution of staff have greatly affected the amount of young people that are able to be supported. Already we are seeing a rapid increase in the number

of young people being excluded from school and I believe that had support been given by a YEW in a timely manner - e.g. before intervention was too late - then there would be high possibility that they would still be in school today.

I believe that the safeguarding of young people would be put greatly at risk. Years of experience tell me that young people only confide in those they trust and time and time again we have seen young people confide in YEW's because of that long-term relationship. I believe we will also see a disaffection and a disconnect between young people and society and community - as there aren't adults they can trust - nor services they can access. This is already being seen in many of the young people we know getting more involved in crime and larger gangs and connected issues of Anti-social behaviour. I also believe that helping those more vulnerable young people into Education, Employment and training will be all the harder as there will not be the relationships nor support to make that happen therefore increasing the amount of young people who would be NEET.

The Youth Engagement Service has key in the discovery and support of Child Sexual Exploitation that we have had in the community. Without them being on the ground and being connected with young people and preventing any further abuse I am unsure whether it would have been discovered. Our working with them means that we are able to provide strength and support for each other and sharing resources and expertise and experience and therefore making both services far more effective and efficient by reducing costs and stretching funding further.

Simon Halls

Pioneer Minister for Pinehurst, Bristol Diocese & team leader, shinepinehurst

Chairperson, Pinehurst Initiative Forum

YEWs are integral to the work that we do, they support with laying the foundations for positive mental wellbeing and what's needed for this to be achieved. They offer support and most importantly containment to our young people and are integral to helping YP meet some of their basic needs, housing and meaningful employment or education.

YEWs have a very broad knowledge of current issues facing YP, for example up to date information on housing, benefits, education packages etc. they work with YP around sexual health and condom services provide a space for difficult subjects to be explored. Their engagement skills in my experience of working with YEWs are creative, genius and resourceful.

Lots of our YP would be the first to feel the impact. They would be losing an important part of their protective network that is integral to the keeping of these YP safe. This then impacts on our service as there is an increase in distress they would feel. Getting to appt would be affected and would, in my view affect the engagement rate.

Sam Rothwell

CaMHS

As a service we rely very much upon the Youth Engagement Team to provide support to children and young people living across Swindon. Early intervention for children and families before problems or behaviours become entrenched is far cheaper and more effective than the pressure that can be placed upon multiple agencies through chaotic lifestyles.

In tune with many other areas in the country, Swindon is seeing an increase in knife crime and knife carriage by youths and an upturn in gang-related activity. It is difficult to know how we could progress a multi-agency prevention plan to tackle these issues if we no longer had a Youth Engagement Service to assist in the delivery or mitigation and solutions. Much of my multi-agency plan, which is currently before DHP Cherry Jones for consideration, relies upon youth services.

Charlie Armstrong

Swindon Borough Policing Commander

I consider the YEW service to be an integral part of the support that our students are in need of. Catch 22 works predominantly with young people aged 16-19 years old who have experienced difficulties within mainstream education settings and at risk of being long-term NEET, lacking basic qualifications and employability skills. From extensive assessment of our students we recognise that these difficulties are linked to a number of vulnerability factors, nearly always at a multi-vulnerability level, including mental health issues, sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, neglect and other child protection issues, learning difficulties and social and emotional difficulties, in particular recognised ASC or previously undiagnosed ASC that has only been diagnosed in Year 11.

The young people we work with are among the most difficult to engage in education and training and as a provision we do not have the capacity of remit to solely manage that engagement process. We work with many young people who have stopped going to school around Year 10 and have developed difficulties that often stop them leaving their house, making attendance at mainstream colleges or work placements impossible. I would estimate from our current cohort that 60% have had a YEW either at the engagement stage or have been referred for additional needs to enable them to remain engaged with their education and training.

The YEWs we work particularly closely with are Lindsay Poole, Brendan Buchanan, Danni Colucci, Connie Jeapes, Debbie Hing, Steve Richards and Hannah Kinross, all of whom have extensive skills and a real drive to work in a targeted yet young-person focussed approach. I cannot emphasise the support that YEWs provide for the most vulnerable young people, their role is vital. While we also work closely with CAMHS, social services and YOT, the youth engagement workers are the professionals that provide the glue that allows the young person to work effectively with these other services.

I would be extremely concerned if there was a reduction in this service as I feel really strongly that many of our students would easily fall through the cracks that are appearing as statutory services become more stretched. Again, I would like to emphasise that our students are those that require these vital relationships to enable them to engage, alongside the practical support they provide to ensure that these young people do not go un-noticed.

Laura Holmes

Project Manager

Catch 22 Study Programme

I am emailing you as I have been told that the Youth Engagement Service (YES) is currently under review and I wanted to let you know how valuable the service is to the young people in Swindon who are NEET or at risk of being NEET from a College perspective and in my role as Additional Support Manager.

- For students who are withdrawn because of very poor or no attendance, in previous years the young people have had the safety net of the Gateway Project. Currently we have option but to refer them to the YES who are then able to meet with the young people, parents/carers to look at alternative options or providers. These two young people had NO identified learning needs previously, both have complex co-occurring difficulties/disabilities. The YES have been able to support them through the Statutory Assessment process alongside the Swindon Advocacy Movement and to look at and introduce them to alternative providers. The student from last year is now with Catch 22. The YES are able to meet with the young people, parents/carers in their home, which is not an option for the College. To date this year I have made 3 referrals to YES, there are other colleagues and I would assume Swindon & Cirencester College referring to the service?
- The YES workers are able to work with the young people who are vulnerable to exploitation stay safe.
- The YES workers are also invaluable in securing places for young people who are not ready for a mainstream college placement, whether that is an Independent Specialist Provider or a course at New College which requires an EHCP and High Needs Funding. We have success stories if required?

I have worked with a number of Youth Engagement Workers over the years, they are able to provide the young people and their parents/ carers with valuable 'independent' advice and guidance.

In many cases we have to rely on the YES to gather previous history on a young person, invaluable if we are to meet their needs.

I hope this helps you and your team and sincerely hope that there are no changes to a service that has already seen too many cuts. There are now so few opportunities for young people in Swindon with few Youth Centres open. I must also admit that I do not know the width and breadth of your service offer, only that which directly impacts on young people in the FE sector.

Sarah Howes

Additional Support Manager

New College

Highworth Town Council is aware of the valuable contribution that this service makes to the lives of young people and their families in Highworth and the wider Swindon Area.

Young people are often marginalised within society and have few avenues of the support which are there to specifically meet their needs, at a time, place and pace that fits with the young person. The Youth Engagement Service is in a unique position to be able offer professional support to young people with the engagement being on a voluntary basis. It can work flexibly without limitations put on the number of sessions it is able to offer to a young person. There is no pressure for the young person to work through his or her issues within a predetermined timeframe, ensuring that the best possible outcomes for that young person can be achieved in a sustainable way, thus preventing the need for higher cost services later on in life.

The level of service that it provides, often with a lone worker is second to none. The service works with whole families to ensure that any changes that are made by young people are matched within the family setting, ensuring the best possible chance of sustainability and reducing the need for social care intervention.

The Council is aware of some of the cases that the Youth engagement workers have worked and are working with. The cost benefits are that they can be flexible, quick to respond, work with whole families on their own or in partnership with other agencies. The Council has examples where these Youth Engagement Workers are working alongside social workers with young people who are in care, those living on their own with no other support, and those who are at risk and require child protection plans in place to safeguard them. These workers are the ones who stick with the young people when all others have exhausted their efforts.

This workforce appear to have been trained extensively to be able to respond to the changing issues of the day, for example risk taking of a much higher level than we have previously witnessed, and exploitation such as sexual and criminal. The Councillors value the fact that young people can self-refer; it is a voluntary relationship that is built on trust and openness. Young people have the opportunity to work on a one to one basis or within a group setting with their peers, and trusting adults in their local community.

The cost benefit of a youth engagement service is financial, personal, and has a positive impact on wider society. Without this service there is likely to be an increased need for alternatively services, which in the current financial climate are already overstretched or possibly are no longer available. This is only likely to put young people at further risk and an increase in the need for social services to be involved.

In response to the consultation regarding the Youth Engagement Service, Highworth Town Council is strongly oppose any cuts to this valuable service.

David Lane

Town Clerk

Highworth Town Council

What value do youth engagement workers bring to your work with young people?

Young people feel supported and valued. They are worth something, boosts their self worth. It gives them somebody to talk to outside of school and home. A person they can trust who does not judge them.

What particular skills/knowledge do you feel youth engagement workers have that are different to other services available?

Young people are not intimidated, feel less threatened and feel they have a voice. They discuss their future plans and the YEW's set them on the right path. Young people see them as good role models.

What would be the immediate impact of a reduction/loss of service?

Young people would not have a significant adult in their life. A devastating blow for young people.

What would be the long term impact of a reduction/loss of service?

Young people will not make the right choices, they will turn to others that could influence and exploit them.

Are there any examples where working with Youth Engagement Service has stopped any escalation of an issue or more funding being required?

Young people have returned to school, have taken the right career path with the knowledge and expertise of the YEW Team,

It would be a devastating loss for the young people of Swindon. I am sure there would be a rise in CSE, NEET and crime.

Mrs L Bulpitt

Head of Key Stage 4

Isambard Community School

At Green Labyrinth we work with young people who have a range of different issues, such as social and emotional difficulties who do not have a EHCP/statement or mental health issues. We work closely with YEWs to help engage these young people back into education. Their work is vital to our programme because they mentor these young people to a point where they are ready to sign up with us, they help with the transition and review the young peoples progress while with us.

Where we can support with our students in an Educational environment, YEWs can help support them outside of education with the issues that cause barriers to learning and this can help them achieve on course.

They can provide a mentoring service that helps build trust with a young person, which is needed when they are disengaged. Once they have gained the trust of a young person they can help arrange other services involvement, such as Uturn or on track – with the YP may have not been willing to attend before.

They can offer advice and guidance for education and services that are available for young person and their family, that they may not have been aware of.

All of this is incredibly important to the young persons success and unfortunately something we cannot fully offer ourselves. Especially now The Gateway project has finished.

I am greatly concerned by the possible loss of the YE for people who do not fit in the 'vulnerable category' as many of our learners are hard to reach due to mental health or family dynamics and if we lost the service I feel I would have several YPs who would disengage as they would not have the support needed outside of Education.

Also this term I have had to remove 3 learners from our course due to behaviour that was detrimental to other staff and learners. They were all referred back to YE and without the service they would have become NEET without support to help deal with the issues that have and eventual re engagement to EET.

We would risk a lack of knowledge of learners in post 16 education and mental health/behaviour issues may not be supported properly, which may be detrimental to our staff and other students and result in us being unable to take certain learners.

Without a supported transition into GL we would risk disengagement of the YP on programme or losing contact with them as we are not able to do home visits.

Therefore, without the YEWs intervention I believe that our referrals would be reduced and there is a huge risk of YPs who are not being supported by any other services, becoming NEET for long periods due to lack of support with personal barriers and not being aware of options available to them, which in turn would affect their employability and possibly divert them to criminality.

Currently this year I have had 11 learners out of 33 students dealing with YEWs, I withdrawn 3 but the rest have managed to stay engaged and on programme this term with a lot of hard work from their YEWs. I receive contact at least once a week from a YEW making a referral to our programme (I have 2 appointments this week already). Only 3 of these learners fit the proposed category of young people who the smaller team of YEWs would work with in the future.

The learners I removed from course are working once again with their YEWs to look for alternatives placements and help with behaviour issues, as I am updated on their progress and they are keeping away from criminal behaviour – only 1 of these learners fits the proposed category.

One LAC learner who finds it difficult to trust people due to previous issues is with Key 2 and is still being supported by their YEW as their attendance is at 50% and they are at risk of being NEET. With this YEW 'touching base' with the learner once a week we are finding an improvement in attendance.

I have 6 learners with mental health/anxiety/behaviour issues that are attending regularly and will achieve on course, they would not have even attended an interview with myself if it was not for support and transition of their YEWs – they do not fit in the proposed category.

Laura Miller

Study Programme Student Services Manager

Green Inc (eu) Limited

Where is the Sense is cutting an essential proactive Youth Engagement Service?

I have worked with Swindon Borough Council Youth Engagement Service for over 10 years now, in my current role as Careers Adviser/Coordinator at the Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, and prior to this in the capacity of Education Welfare Officer.

Gradually, I have seen the services offered to Young People, especially those Young People who have become disengaged from Education, become eroded and sometimes disappear completely. To offer a minimal service to young people, which can be erratic and unpredictable, can often be more damaging than offering nothing at all.

SBC Youth Engagement Service has been one of those services which has managed, often in really difficult circumstances, to offer a consistent, valuable and genuine service to vulnerable young people. We have referred a number of students in Year 10 and Year 11, who, for one reason or another, have started to disengage or have completely disengaged from Education. Many have no relationship with their parents, a medical issue or complex mental health issues. What the Youth Engagement Workers have been able to do, in a non-judgemental way, is make contact at the homes of the students, create a relationship of trust with the student and the family and act as someone who can coordinate and pull together all the relevant services needed to support, and reduce isolation. On a financial level, this proactive work can, in turn, can reduce the need for emergency service call outs, and even hospitalisation. For a young person to have a point of contact is one of the most valuable services, and yet now, one of the rarest.

These services continue to be cut by local authorities – yes, it is so hard to 'quantify' the impact that Youth Engagement Workers provide - to measure confidence, socialisation, self-belief and other 'soft' targets – but surely, where there is so much governmental pressure on schools to provide additional Mental Health Services, should this not be followed through into the Community and additional Youth Support should be deployed, not less. Where is the responsive CAMHS provision? Very thin on the ground, and we need to be working towards preventing the need for CAMHS, by early and proactive work with Young People at a young age – and this can only be done with a Youth Engagement Service that bridges the gap between non-engagement and isolation, and prevents escalation and financial cost to society.

It seems obvious and unnecessary to spell out the fallout of reducing the capacity of the Youth Engagement Service.

Kerry Hall

Careers Coordinator, Royal Wootton Bassett Academy.

Swindon Borough Council strapline of Working Together epitomises all the dealings we have had with the Youth Engagement Service, without whom many young people would have become lost in society.

We have had a long and successful working relationship with the Youth Engagement Workers at The Dorcan Academy. The outcomes for young people have been bettered because of their direct involvement with them. They have operated as supportive, and critical friends to young people.

The individual YEWs offer the independent support and advice that enables our young people to reach good decisions for themselves, without having a decision thrust upon them.

They work closely with our PCSO's and community leaders to resolve issues by mutual consent, saving thousands of pounds, as well as resolving issues.

The highest accolade is paid by the young people themselves who have benefitted from the high quality, timely and effective interventions they provide. They speak extremely highly of them. With the ever dwindling support available to these young people, it has to be a massive concern that such support will be reduced even further.

The young people that have benefited from their input has saved the education service thousands of pounds, whilst ensuring opportunity to become effective members of society.

The skills of the YEWs are highly specialist, with access to appropriate specialist contacts. They have up to date information regarding entitlement whilst offering positive, immediate support at the point of crisis, when other agencies walk away. Our experience at Dorcan is that they have engaged successfully with young people disengaged from the education process, those on the edge of criminal activity, experiencing family breakdown and at risk of becoming homeless, and those who don't have adult support from home because of mental health, substance mis-use and other issues - not only the targeted groups that will be their core business in the future. Our students currently supported by the service would not fit LAC, young offenders or CSE criteria. We are a secondary school who have school leavers returning to us for help because they are desperate for help. The Youth Engagement Service is the only agency who will become actively involved in supporting them at their moment of crisis and need.

The school has many examples of this type of work, some still current. Without their input vulnerable young people will be lost in the system and often become on the edge of society.

It is a service already over stretched. When it bursts, there will be no support for anybody.

Without their services long term more young people will be put at risk.

Examples of extremely supportive intervention:

Student 1 : LAC – Section 20; parent with a history of being sectioned; post 16 lived with a distant aunt who turned away when she began to question her own sexuality; significant self-harm, and hospital admission; received no support from FE provider.

YEW became involved via Dorcan. YEW helped student apply for an apprenticeship and helped her seek alternative accommodation.

Student 2 - ongoing court case against father for sexual abuse; very intelligent young person; made homeless by mother at 16; moved in with boyfriend's family out of Borough. No support from FE provider despite her being active in seeking it.

YEW sought her out on Facebook after we had highlighted her to them.

No other agency took any interest in her. YEW helped her apply for a different College placement and apprenticeship and offered advice on funding; took her to her "home" to collect her belongings.

It is with dismay that I read the proposals to cut the budget which funds the Youth Engagement Service – it is the vulnerable young people of Swindon who will suffer the most if the service is cut, like those above, who have the fewest resources of their own to help them make a positive start in society. The potentially modest savings from this budget would surely become substantial financial burdens in other budgets if these young people can't play a positive part in society.

If you wish to discuss any of my comments further please contact me

Kim Pakenham

External Support Coordinator

The Dorcan Academy

I am very concerned to hear about possible cuts to the Youth Engagement Service. This is a vital service that delivers essential support to the most vulnerable young people in Swindon.

As an alternative educational provider, the Swindon Tuition Service works with some of the most disengaged and vulnerable pupils to encourage them to attend their education, to value themselves and to help them to focus on a positive future. The Youth Engagement Service is an integral part of this process. YEW's supporting pupils will do their utmost to get them into our centres if they are going through a difficult patch and refusing to come into school. They will spend time with the young person to help build their self-esteem and confidence and to support them to overcome their barriers. For many of our young people the Youth Engagement Worker is the closest and only consistent professional they have supporting them and this help is invaluable in their sometimes turbulent lives. Many act as lead professionals for these young people and we have found this service to be consistently willing to go the extra mile for our young people. This non prescriptive approach has enabled them to establish links and relationships where many others have failed.

Swindon Tuition Service has commissioned Julian White a YEW with many years of experience, offering careers advice and guidance to young people in Swindon. His knowledge and dedication to support our Post 16 transition process for the pupils has strengthened our service with many successful outcomes that may not have been achieved without his expertise. Julian works collaboratively with all professionals seeking to gather information that will support the pupils, regularly coming up with creative ideas.

We strongly believe that if the Youth Engagement Service was to be removed there would be an increase in NEETS in Swindon, as there is no other service with the experience, dedication and passion for supporting young people. School attendance for vulnerable pupils will be at an all-time low, school refuser numbers will rise and more young people will be involved in crime. The short term cost saving of removing this service we believe will be outweighed by the bigger cost to society as there will be increased costs and pressure on other services due to non-attendance, mental health and crime.

We should be investing in the young people in Swindon as they are our future, not taking away vital support services from them.

Tracy Faulkner

Transitions Manager and Enrichment Lead

Swindon Tuition Service

1) What value do youth engagement workers bring to your work with young people?

YEW's have a massive positive impact on the young people in our education service. They help with attendance, build self-esteem to help the young people be able to cope with everyday living, provide invaluable life skills that we don't have the opportunity to do in the classroom. They help with the organisation of these young people who would miss important dates / appointments if they were not being supported, communicating with YOT as well. They provide a much needed link between school and home, especially when some of our parents / carers are hard to reach. They provide an invaluable link for our LAC, especially since LACES has closed. They also help with transition for post 16 when support from our service ceases. They also help to keep the young pupils to stay out of trouble.

2) What particular skills/knowledge do you feel youth engagement workers have that are different to other services available?

We rarely have intervention from other services, which makes the service they provide even more invaluable. Support from Social workers are often scarce, due to excessive workloads.....and we find that YEW's are more reliable. They never cancel unlike social workers. They are really personable, and do not have the clash of personalities that can occur with social workers. They are great at building positive relationships with our young people. They also have wider knowledge of opportunities and contacts for our high profile young people enabling them to access stuff that we don't even know exists!!

3) What would be the immediate impact of a reduction/loss of service?

Well-being of our pupils, some of which have mental health issues. Lower self-esteem. Attendance will be affected. Loss of contact with home, therefore loss of educational time

as more of our time will be wasted chasing pupils/parents. The tuition service would not be as successful as it is with these vulnerable pupils, and transition to post 16 would be lost, resulting in more NEET kids!

4) What would be the long term impact of a reduction/loss of service?

We can already see that we have a number of KS3 pupils we have that will also be in need of the support that our current pupils receive. Higher incidents of problems / trouble with police / mental health issues.

5) Are there any examples where working with Youth Engagement Service has stopped any escalation of an issue or more funding being required?

Yes – two of my pupils have been downgraded from CP to CHIN partly due to the support received from YEW's. One has avoided further contact from YOT due to intervention.

Gail Baker

Swindon Tuition Service

Appendix D

Central South User Feedback – 2016

In all the questionnaires that we have asked young people to complete, 100% of young people have graded us as **‘excellent’** or **‘good’** for the following statements:

- I feel listened to by my worker
- My worker does what they say they will do
- My worker makes sure I understand why they sometimes need to share things I have told them with other people
- My worker has helped me to find out how to be safer
- My worker has helped me to find out about jobs, apprenticeships or college

Here are some of the responses we have received from the following questions:

Can you tell us 2 or 3 things that are better (or a lot better) in your life, since you started getting support from your worker?

- No substance abuse
- Better relationship with family members
- No longer feel stuck, now moving forward
- I can deal with my anxiety a lot better through going out to public places
- I feel confident to go into the outside world
- I have learnt about staying safe online
- I know more about how to stay safe in my personal life
- It helped speaking to her (YEW), me being able to understand certain things and she helped me get into college
- I've quit smoking and got better at school
- counselling, back into training, things are easier with Job Centre
- Less arguments with my mum
- Moving away from family to live on my own
- Feel like I'm moving forward a lot
- Feeling pleased that I am going to an interview with Learn Direct
- Doing my CV and going on job sites
- A huge reduction in stress
- Understanding healthy/unhealthy relationships
- School, home, emotional wellbeing

Is there anything about the support you get that you don't like or that could be improved?

- Nope
- Nope, its all good
- How to control my anger
- No. Nothing
- I was happy with the support and had no issues

Some quotes from young people.....

“Having working with Tamarin throughout this year, has had a huge impact on where I am now. After seeing CAMHs for over 4 years, and the service being very unhelpful for me. I lost trust and enclosed myself from every professional. Having a youth engagement worker, being that I wasn't rushed into working or complying with her, but a steadily relationship was built. And things that I would never of been able to do like leaving the house without my mum, or opening up about how I was actually feeling to a degree was achieved. Having a voice to speak for me when I couldn't do

so, and making my appointments at Marlborough House a little bearable. Having seeing numerous amounts of people, I can honestly say Tamarin has been the most help in keeping me being here today. Not having her to turn to when in a distressed way or to talk to when things aren't going so great would most likely turn to me doing unhelpful or dangerous behaviours. And during this moment having somebody there to help me get back into Education without that I wouldn't be able to go back. Which would obviously lead to a a number of negative outcomes"

(17yr old female, anorexic, NEET, Child in Need, supporting to access Catch22 and now in part-time work)

"I have difficulties seeing good things about me, but activities I do with Connie slowly makes me realise that I do have good parts"

(15yr old, referred through school & FCP, C.S.E concerns)

"Lindsay has helped me to open up about my feelings which is a big help to me because I never used to talk about my feelings. Lindsay is a big support to me. Lindsay has helped me to meet new people. She gives me a lot of good advice when I am in a bad situation or feeling low. She understands/listens"

(18yr old , LAC, self harming, CAMHS and UTurn. Supported to access Catch22 and then Princes Trust Get into Retail and now working at M&S as a result).

Sometimes the feedback comes in a different format....



(thank you mug made by a 16yr old yp to thank YEW for support around transgender, emotional health and college transition issues. Now in full time college)

All of this information can be found in the Good Practice folder for the South Central Team along with further questionnaires, emails and letters/cards from young people.

Appendix E

Central South Parent Feedback – 2016

In all the questionnaires that we have asked parents to complete, 100% of parents have graded us as ‘**excellent**’ or ‘**good**’ for the following statements:

- I feel the worker listened to me
- The worker did what they said they would do
- The worker was supportive
- Overall the service my family received was....
-

Here are some of the responses we have received from the following questions:

How has working with the Youth Engagement Worker helped or impacted your family?

- Its helped us as a family to talk more and the support we get is amazing
- She has helped me a great deal where my son is concerns and also been a great help and support for myself too
- Has given my daughter more confidence
- Given me hope and support. Given us ideas to use as a family

What have you or your family to be most helpful, while working with the YEW?

- The support when my daughter needed it
- The fact that they talk you through everything. Any problems you may have they always help to sort them out.
- Someone to talk to about problems and advice on what to do.

Is there anything about the support you got that you think could improve or that you didn't like?

- Nope. The work they do is amazing.
- No, nothing. I couldn't have coped without the support and information I received.
- No. She was amazing

- No. Very pleased with everything
- No, everything was very good.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about the support you received from the YEW?

- Couldn't have asked for a nicer YEW. She is lovely and the support you get is so nice.
- She is always there to help, even out of hours. Plus she is easy to talk to which helps my son a great deal.
- I am extremely grateful for all of the help and advice that I have received. This is an excellent and invaluable service which is very much needed

Quotes from parents....

“you (Txxxx) are the only person that was there at the beginning when i found out what had happened to Mxxxx. Off all the people that promised to help her ,you are the only person that has remained and carried on helping her. every body else disappeared. that made her not trust any body, did in fact more damage than good. if Mxxx never had you to talk to and support her i think she would go down hill very fast. As you know i only know a little bit of what went on. So I’m glad she talks to you.....because who else is there????????”

(Mother of 15yr old transgender young person, previous sexual abuse (YEW has been main support chosen by young person in this), now in college pre16s but at risk of losing place, missing episodes, CSE vulnerabilities – ongoing case)

“We feel Exxx has helped Kxxx to communicate more effectively with us. She has provided support and signposted him to outside organisations, who have helped him with his mental health issues, transgender status, friendship issues and coping strategies. She has continued to support him and ensure this is the best path for him. We feel Exxx has shown genuine care for Kxx and our family beyond our expectations”

(parents of 16yr old transgender young person, under CAMHs, long term attendee at Girls Group where he was supported to continue attending for a period after he transitioned from female to male. Gained valuable worker & staff support. Now in full time college – case now closed)

“the knowledge that someone is there to help and support us is very comforting. We have used some of the ideas that Cxxx has suggested to us ad they have had a positive outcome. Thank you”

(Mother of 15yr old young person, very complicated family breakdown, young person engaging in risky behaviours, support with moved to alternative education project and support in Yr11 in preparation for transition – ongoing case)

“ It has had a very positive impact on my family. My daughter has had access to many good opportunities offered to her as a result of her working with Lxxx. She is currently on a study program which she acquired through Lxxx. Her self-confidence is improving and she is starting to believe in herself. Her relationship with me (mum) is better as she has someone else (outside of the family) that she can confide in”

(Mother of 17yr old previously at New College and now at Catch22. Anxiety & self harm issues, CSE concerns (referral via FCP) and worked with YEW on two separate involvements when became NEET again – case now closed)

All of this information can be found in the Good Practice folder for the South Central Team along with further questionnaires, emails and letters from parents.

Appendix F

Parent and Young Person Feedback – North and Central North

What value do youth engagement workers bring to your work with young people?

“Helped me stay safe” “Taught me to keep my anger under control” “I never knew how much of a strong person I was, and now I have been encouraged by *** to know it” “no one really listened to me until then” “Internet safety – I’m more careful now” “I couldn’t have done half the things I have without your support” “I wouldn’t have got anywhere without you” “Helped me to understand different ways of dealing with a situation....having that person at the end of the phone for support has been a massive help” “Giving my son some confidence ...someone listening to him outside the family” “My son can speak without feeling judged”

What particular skills/knowledge do you feel youth engagement workers have that is different to other services available?

“Just chatting like normal people” “I used to have no hope of college....but now I’m more confident that I’ve ever been” “****helped me make an important decision” “kind and helpful and a good listener” “*** was able to keep my daughter safe” “****has gone above and beyond, made herself available for my family”

What would be the immediate impact of a reduction/loss of service?

“my daughter would never have got into college without ****” “our family would still be fighting if we never met ***” “I would still be homeless if *** hadn’t rang me”

“To whom it may concern.

I'm going to start by saying this. I haven't really been told exactly what's happening, and why it is.

Although part of me is interested the other part isn't too interested in the nitty gritty details...

My priority and understanding of what is happening is this:

For some reason, my youth engagement worker, may not be with me anymore, and that's possibly going to be the same for other kids my age as well.

So I'm writing to you in hopes you'd recognise how important this is.

Simply put, I can't say that i would still be here if I didn't have my youth engagement worker.

I've felt alone and isolated with so much anxiety of the outside world I couldn't go out.

My future was unclear as I was growing up and needed to think of a career and finding independence.

How could I though? When every time I even thought of leaving my house I felt as if the world would collapse around me.

Is this program worth it?

Well you just have to ask yourself the simple question...

Would you rather allow this amazingly life changing group of people keep doing what they are now, saving kids from doing silly things or just showing them how to use a credit card.

Or would you rather get rid of this group, and have young people give up on life too early, because they had nobody there to help them.

I hope you take my words into consideration. Since they couldn't be more important as this directly affects me and many others like me.

I can safely say my youth engagement worker has changed my life for the better.

I am so thankful to them for everything they have done”.

Central North

Youth Engagement Service

Service User feedback

Engaging and assessing need

YEWs work hard to build relationships with some of the most challenging or disengaged young people. YEWs are able to develop young people's emotional literacy and help young people to identify their own barriers to emotional social and economic wellbeing. This can identify specific areas of need and enable young people to receive the most appropriate support or service.

‘I find it easier to talk’

‘People have listened to me’

‘I have started to talk more about how I feel’

‘I feel supported and not alone’

‘It helped me a lot talking to you about everything that was going on in my life, now I feel like you was the only person who understood me’

‘It may not seem like I wanted to talk to you but I did it was just hard for me’

- **100% of feedback was either Excellent or Good for young people who felt they were listened to by their worker**

Barriers to education and employment

YEWs are able to support young people to identify deeper issues that influence their participation in education training and employment. YEWs work hard to motivate young people, develop their

confidence and self-worth and support through turbulent times of change or transition. YEWs have specialist and professional knowledge of careers advice and guidance and work closely with mainstream, specialist and alternative educative providers in Swindon.

'I have got motivation for what I want to do and have gained experiences'

'Encouraging me to get my life back'

'I can meet new people easily, apply for college and go out more'

'The way I approach people has improved a lot'

'YEW is the reason I am at university as she helped me to see a way and helped my confidence'

'If I hadn't met YEW I think I would have dropped out of college'

'I understand what I need to do to be a bricklayer'

'I truly believe my son would not be in proper education if he didn't have this amazing service offered to him'

- **100% of feedback from young people who were identified as needing support with EET was either Excellent or good for helping them too find out about jobs, apprenticeships or college**

Reducing Risk

The support that YEWS offer young people and their families within Early Help reduces risk, safeguards and can prevent family breakdown. YEWs are able to assess need and put clear plans in place that can prevent families needing any or further intervention from social services or Mental health services. YEWs are able to offer creative and flexible interventions in order to meet the needs of young people.

'I really have appreciated your help over these past few months with everything from telling you about the bad things my horrible family were doing to me and your help to get me away from them so I could have a better life'

'Me and my daughter had big communication issues and YEW basically solved all of our issues in a massive way'

'I'm not going missing anymore'

'Helped me so much with my relationship with different people helped me a lot with my communication skills and finding somewhere to live.'

'I can talk to my family more.'

'YEW has helped me through the roughest parts of my life and has always been there for me no matter what.'

- **100% of feedback was either Excellent or Good for young people having help to find out how to be safer**
- **100% of feedback was either Excellent or Good for young people understanding confidentiality and information sharing**

Developing self-esteem and positive mental health

Young people are increasingly being affected by issues such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression, which can also be contributing factors to risk taking behaviour and substance abuse. YEWs work to develop young people's confidence along with delivering support for young people experiencing mental health difficulties.

'The biggest change is my daughter now leaves the house – she was housebound for 4 years with anxiety and stress'

'I have a lot more confidence'

'I am so much more confident and am going out a lot'

'More positive'

'Happier in general. Stop being very hard on myself'

'Not having self-harming thoughts'

'Without this amazing service our family would still be stress and depressed, I could not see a way out of this awful situation'

Feedback forms completed from young people = 13	Number recorded as Excellent	Number recorded as good	Total	Percentage of feedback recorded as Excellent	Percentage of feedback recorded as Excellent/Good
I feel listened to by my worker	11	2	13	84%	100%
My worker does what they will do	11	1	12	84%	92%
My worker makes sure I understand why they sometimes need to share things I have told them with other people	13		13	100%	100%
My worker has helped me to find out how to be safer	10	3	13	76%	100%
My worker has helped me to find out about jobs, apprenticeships or college	10	2	12	76%	92%

Appendix G

Submitted by Gail McVicar
05.12.16

Proposal for

Youth Engagement Worker Consultation:

Supporting the most vulnerable young people before they reach crisis point

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Summary

In an effort to respond to the financial pressures of a potential £136,000 reduction in budget, the Youth Engagement Service (YES) need to modify its provision to deliver a service "... to support children and families when they need it- aiming to intervene early wherever possible and prevent problems form escalating."¹

YES would maintain work with:

- contributions to Troubled Families
- duties related to supporting Year 12 and 13 NEETS
- specialist advice for young offenders and care leavers

BUT would

- expand time limited interventions (either 1-2-1 or group work) for young people (year 6 - year 13), to focus on specific target populations:
 - young people that have witnessed/ experienced or are at risk of experiencing domestic violence and abuse(DVA)
 - young people at risk of or have experienced FGM, CSE or criminal exploitation
 - young parents*
 - young people exploring their sexual orientation, gender identity or struggling with gender dysphoria
 - young people struggling with emotional health that do not meet the referral criteria for TaMHS, CAMHS,OSCA or Marlborough House
 - Year 6 students that have completed the maximum 12 weeks of support offered by the Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Support Team, but still require additional support to make a successful transition to secondary school

Traded Services could generate income by providing six options of support:

- A programme of informal education at schools or college for young people with challenging behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- Offer Information Advice Guidance interviews for Year 10 and 11.
- An enhanced post 16 transitions package for selected pupils by the school
- Provide universal transition programme to ease the shift from Year 6 students to Year 7
- Provide continuity of support for SEMH students to transition to secondary
- Group work made available to parents/ carers in an effort to increase their understanding of issues of CSE, FGM, domestic violence and abuse, sexual assault, sexual orientation, gender identities, using technology safely, emotional health and wellbeing and healthy relationships. Parents/ carers could be identified via SEMH, TaMHS, Social Care, schools, NSPCC, SHE Group, Troubled Families and the Family Service.

Due to the Ofsted reports citing Swindon schools as Inadequate or Requiring Improvement with aspects being connected to behavior and exclusion rates, the influx of £600,000 for school improvements may be a funding source for this work.

Introduction

**Family Nurse Partnership currently work with young mothers but not young fathers. Should their funding come to an end, YES could work with this population as it had in the past*

¹ Children, Family & Community Health Early Help Business and Improvement Plan 2016 – 2017, Reeve K (2015)

Although the Youth Engagement Workers (YEWs) are part of the Early Help team, more often than not we are receiving requests for service after a young person is already involved with or just below threshold for social care, exclusions, offending or once they are no longer involved in education, employment or training. There is no question that we need to continue to work with those that are most vulnerable and experiencing negative outcomes (*Downstream*), but I would suggest that we are well placed to also build resiliencies and reduce risk for young people before they are at the edge of crisis points (*Midstream* and *Upstream*).

DEFINITIONS ²

UPSTREAM INTERVENTIONS	MIDSTREAM INTERVENTIONS	DOWNSTREAM INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to reform the fundamental social and economic structures that distribute wealth, power, opportunities, and decision-making. • They are about diminishing the causes-of-the-causes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to reduce exposure to hazards by improving material working and living conditions, or to reduce risk by promoting healthy behaviours. • They are about changing the causes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to increase equitable access, at an individual or family level, to health and social services. • They are about changing the effects of the causes.

Challenges

Should the Elected Members choose to reduce the Youth Engagement Service (YES) budget by approximately £136,000 as is currently proposed in the *2016/17 Budget Management and 2017/18 Draft Budget*³, the YES would face a reduction of 4.04 full time equivalent posts.⁴

YES would maintain:

- its contributions to Troubled Families
- duties related to supporting Year 12 and 13 NEETS
- specialist advice for young offenders and care leavers
- traded services
- interventions for young people in or at risk of engaging in high risk taking behaviours

However, with reduced staff, caseloads would increase. If Elected Members decide to make a reduction greater than £136,000, the ability of YES to meet current requirements would be further strained. Due to these pressures, it is necessary to become more efficient in providing our service, while supporting the most vulnerable young people before they reach crisis point. The above duties would be considered Downstream interventions or perhaps Midstream, at best.

Rationale

² *Let's Talk Moving Upstream*, National Collaborating Centre for Health Determinants of Health, 2014, <http://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/lets-talk-moving-upstream> accessed 21.11.16

³ <http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=285&MId=7427>, accessed 03.12.16

⁴ *Early Help YEW Review to inform Budget and Savings Decisions 2016*, Leaning., K & S. Smith, (2016)

Over Q2 the YES has worked with 13 young people in care, 49 children in need and 7 with child protection plans, 45 with an education health care plan, 71 young carers, 24 young offenders, 6 with >2 domestic violence contacts in the prior 6 months, 20 with <90% attendance and 95 phase 2 Troubled Families vulnerabilities. We are working with the most vulnerable as identified by schools/ colleges/ EOTAS or their ongoing involvement with social care, YOT, TaMHS, CAMHS and OPAL. Despite our work to achieve 202 outcomes in Q2 which focus on Engaging in Learning, Gaining Employment, Emotional Health, Successful Transition and dealing with Family Issues, we are still seeing statistics that indicate more work needs to be done with those on the edge of social care, exploitation, offending and problematic emotional health concerns. We need to be moving Upstream as well.

Working Upstream not only is the morally correct thing to do, but also is the financially responsible thing to do. For every child prevented from going into care, social services would save on average £65, 000 per year. Every domestic violence incident prevented saves police, local authorities, the Criminal Justice System and the NHS £2,700. Every teen mum who gets back in to Education, Employment and Training (EET) saves agencies £4,500 per year. For every individual who does not develop a mental health issue saves a local authority £2,000 per year⁵

The following illustrates the need for amending our service to work with young people that have been identified through the Early Help Record Assessment before they reach crisis point.

Domestic Violence and Abuse⁶

Within Swindon,

- 58% of children on a child protection plan had domestic abuse noted as one of the risk factors
- In a consultation with young people (10-15years) on average, 60% said they had experienced Domestic Abuse
- Childhood experience of domestic violence among young men is associated with them taking an aggressive, angry and abusing role during dates. Teenage girls with a history of family violence are also more susceptible to violence within intimate relationships.
- Young people who experienced family violence were nearly four times as likely, to have had a relationship than those who had not.
- Those who had a history of family violence were more likely to have experienced a relationship at an earlier age than young people who had not.
- Over half of 13-14 year olds had some direct experiences of domestic abuse, whether as victims, witnesses, or perpetrators.
- 44% of boys and 46% of girls who had been on a date had experienced at least one of the types of domestic abuse measured.
- Boys were more likely than girls to perceive hitting a partner as justifiable in various circumstances, but much less likely to say they would seek help if it happened to them
- Young people with a same-sex partner were more likely to have experienced family violence than had young people with an opposite-sex partner.
- The roundtable on LGBTQ young people particularly recommended the provision of youth work and groups to provide support and safe places for LGBTQ young people. It also advised that the youth work should not depend on sessional and/or part-time youth workers, who might find it difficult to provide support to an individual outside of the group. Without such safe spaces, young LGBTQ people may try to access support in places that leave them vulnerable to abuse – such as online.⁷

⁵ A framework for supporting teenage mothers and fathers, Public Health England, (2016) , https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524506/PHE_LGA_Framework_for_supporting_teenage_mothers_and_young_fathers.pdf accessed 02.12.16.

⁶ Swindon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Domestic Violence and Abuse: The impact on children and young people (2014), www.swindonjsna.co.uk/dna/domestic-violence-and-abuse-needs-assessment accessed 01.12.16.

⁷ It's not on the radar: The hidden diversity of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation in England, Barnardo's (2016), www.barnardos.org.uk/resources/research_and_publications/its-not-on-the-radar/publication-view.jsp?pid=PUB-2760 accessed 03.12.16

- 42.5% of teenage mothers working with the Swindon FNP reported at 12 months after birth having experienced physical, emotional abuse since birth of infant

FGM

- Within Swindon, it is estimated that around 400 women and girls have undergone the form of abuse known as FGM.⁸
- Girls are particularly at risk of FGM during school summer holidays[between years 6-7], when families may take their children abroad for the procedure.⁹
- Youth groups should be run with the consideration that there might be girls or young women who are affected by FGM in the group or young people who come from families who believe FGM is important. Additional support for girls and young women affected by FGM should be available if the need arises. Support young people to access youth-friendly support services and have space for one-to-one conversations if needed. Include mechanisms to access support anonymously.¹⁰

CSE

- In Swindon, young people's attitude toward what might be considered an inappropriate image may differ somewhat from the adult population, with 40% not seeing anything wrong with a topless image, and 15% not taking issue with naked images. 56% of respondents were aware of instances where images and videos were distributed further than the intended recipient but only 23% believed this distribution was intended to cause upset¹¹
- 90% of 16-24 year olds and 69% of 12-15 year olds own a smartphone, giving them the ability to quickly and easily create and share photos and videos.¹²
- 5 out of 6 of the young people who were victims of the Rochdale CSE ring had a learning disability (LD)
- 15% of children with LD experience sexual violence¹³
- Many children with a learning disability lack basic information about child protection. They are more likely to have lower knowledge understanding and self – efficacy to keep safe in relation to bullying, domestic abuse and appropriate and inappropriate touch than their peers
- Improvements could be made to protect LD from CSE via SRE and earlier child centred general support for young people so that issues do not escalate and create risk
- Relationships[with trusted adults] are intrinsic to meeting the needs of young people with LD
- Young people with learning disabilities are vulnerable to CSE due to factors that include overprotection, social isolation and society refusing to view them as sexual beings¹⁴

⁸ Swindon LSCB PowerPoint presentation on FGM, Swindon LSCB (2015), <http://www.swindonlscb.org.uk/wav/Documents/LSCB%20FGM%20Presentation%20June%202015.ppt> accessed 03.12.16

⁹ SRE Covered: all you need to teach about sex and relationships in secondary schools, Islington Healthy Schools (2016) <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/sre-covered-islington-healthy-schools-team> accessed 03.12.16

¹⁰ Communities Tackling FGM in the UK: Best Practice Guide, Tackling Female Genital Mutilation Initiative

and Options Consultancy Services Limited (2016) www.trustforlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Communities-Tackling-FGM-in-the-UK-Best-Practice-Guid.pdf accessed 03.12.16

¹¹ Swindon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Domestic Violence and Abuse: The impact on children and young people (2014), www.swindonsna.co.uk/dna/domestic-violence-and-abuse-needs-assessment accessed 01.12.16.

¹² Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people, UK Council for Child internet Safety, (2016), www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551575/6.2439_KG_NCA_Sexting_in_Schools_WEB_1_PDF accessed 03.12.16

¹³ Child Sexual Exploitation and Young People with Learning Disabilities Training, Barnardo's South West, 18.07.16

¹⁴ Unprotected, Overprotected: meeting the needs of young people with learning disabilities who experience or are at risk of sexual exploitation, Barnardo's, (2015), www.barnardos.org.uk/cse_learning_and_disability_report_2015a.pdf accessed 03.13.16

- Providing accessible sex and relationships education is crucial to prevent the sexual exploitation of young people with learning disabilities
- Without seeing information that shows the risk facing all young people, rather than only heterosexual females, young [LGBT] people may be unaware of what an unhealthy relationship is, and may be more likely to be manipulated into abusive relationships. Equally, without having the correct information to identify possible abuse, perpetrators may be able to convince victims that their treatment is acceptable.¹⁵
- Most young people reported not knowing enough when they first felt ready for sexual experience (68.1% men, 70.6% women), and this did not change substantially over time. They wanted more information about psychosexual matters (41.6% men, 46.8% women), as well as sexually transmitted infections (27.8% men, 29.8% women) and, for women, contraception (27.5%). Young people primarily wanted this information from school, parents or health professionals.¹⁶

Teen Parents¹⁷

- Young mothers and fathers are twice as likely to have been sexually abused in childhood. Survivors of abuse may have low self-esteem and reduced ability to resist unwanted sex
- Risk factors for teenage mothers influencing poor outcomes:
 - Free school meals eligibility (family poverty)
 - Persistent school absence by age 14
 - Slower than expected school progress between ages 11-14
 - Looked after children and care leavers: 3 times rate of motherhood <18
 - Young people who have experienced sexual abuse and exploitation
 - 46% had been suspended, expelled or excluded from school
 - 48% were not in education, employment or training
- Young fathers are more likely than older fathers and other young men:
 - To have been subjected to violent forms of punishment at home and are twice as likely to have been sexually abused
 - To have pre-existing serious anxiety, depression and conduct disorder
 - To have poor health and nutrition
 - To drink, smoke and misuse other substances: 1/6 young men under 25 accessing drug and alcohol services are young fathers

Supporting young parents to be in EET will ensure they get the skills and qualifications they need, improve children's life chances, reduce intergenerational poverty, reduce inequalities and build local social capacity

Young people struggling with Emotional Health

- One in 5 long term unemployed young people feel they have nothing to live for¹⁸
- 1 in 4 long term unemployed young people have been prescribed antidepressants
- 1 in 4 long term unemployed young people have self-harmed

¹⁵ *It's not on the radar: The hidden diversity of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation in England*, Barnardo's (2016), www.barnardos.org.uk/resources/research_and_publications/its-not-on-the-radar/publication-view.jsp?pid=PUB-2760 accessed 03.12.16

¹⁶ *Patterns and trends in sources of information about sex among young people in Britain: evidence from three National Surveys of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles*, Tanton C, Jones KG, Macdowall W, et al.. BMJ Open 2015;5: <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/5/3/e007834.full.pdf+html> accessed 02.12.16

¹⁷ *A framework for supporting teenage mothers and fathers*, Public Health England, (2016) , https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524506/PHE_LGA_Framework_for_supporting_teenage_mothers_and_young_fathers.pdf accessed 02.12.16.

¹⁸ *Mental health Statistics*, Young Minds, (2016), www.youngminds.org.uk/about/whats_the_problem/mental_health_statistics accessed 02.12.16

- “Poor mental health” is positively associated with the probability of being “not in education, employment or training” (NEET). It increases the probability of NEET by 2.7 and 3.3 percentage points for girls and boys respectively after detailed controls are added.
- 44% of young (16-24 year old) LGBT people have considered suicide
- More than half (55 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils have experienced direct bullying. Those who are bullied are at a higher risk of suicide, self-harm and depression.
- Two in five (41 per cent) have attempted or thought about taking their own life directly because of bullying and the same number say that they deliberately self-harm directly because of bullying.
- The Minority Stress Model which proposes that stigma, prejudice and discrimination constitute unique, chronic, psychosocial stressors that can lead to negative health outcomes. Results indicate that the greater the young person's expectation for rejection based on their sexual/gender identity, the more likely they are to report symptoms of anxiety, depression, and suicide ideation. LGBT young people develop with an awareness of society's negative regard for all that is not heterosexual or gender conforming and may apply society's negative attitudes to themselves, resulting in negative self-regard. Minority stressors include heterosexist experiences, stigma consciousness, and sexual identity distress while psychological distress encompasses anxiety, depression, and suicide ideation. The three stressors in combination were the strongest predictor of psychological distress and so young people experiencing high levels of the three minority stressors reported more symptoms of psychological distress. These findings seem to demonstrate that heterosexism is significantly related to feelings of distress and suicidality among LGBTQ youth.¹⁹

Objectives

To refine our early help provision and move Upstream, YES would need to adjust the referral criteria to work with the most vulnerable young people, particularly those with no other involvements with other services. I propose that YES continue with caseloads, but expand their group work with targeted groups of young people with specific areas of concentration based on the multiple SBC need assessments and strategic plans that do not reach young people that are NEET or on the edge of exclusion. By working with groups, we can expand the reach with minimal staff.

Targeted populations would include:

- young people that have witnessed/ experienced or are at risk of experiencing domestic violence and abuse(DVA)
- young people at risk of or have experienced FGM, CSE or criminal exploitation
- young parents
- young people exploring their sexual orientation, gender identity or struggling with gender dysphoria
- young people struggling with emotional health that does not meet the referral criteria for TaMHS, CAMHS, OSCA or Marlborough House
- Year 6 students that have completed the maximum 12 weeks of support offered by the Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Support Team, but still require additional support to make a successful transition to secondary school

By doing this work, we can contribute to the goals of other teams SBC by providing support to young people that are NEET or on the edge of exclusion, but need the same life skills and education as their peers. Many plans focus on delivery via schools or colleges. We can focus on those that will have missed out on the protective factors of high quality sex and relationships education, emotional wellbeing and resilience, positive role models and having a trusted adult in their life.

¹⁹ *Minority stress and health: Implications for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people*, Kelleher C., *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* Volume 22,(2009) - Issue 4

Objective	Needs Assessment or Strategic Plan contributing to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PSHE which promotes healthy relationships, including awareness of Domestic Abuse, and promote emotional wellbeing through a whole school approach. Embed a whole-family approach, including Domestic Abuse, in adult and children services across Swindon • Embed a whole-family approach, including Domestic Abuse, in adult and children services across Swindon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Swindon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Domestic Violence and Abuse: The impact on children and young people</i> Version 1: January 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children and young people receive good quality Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) at home, at school and in the community. • All children and young people know how to ask for help, and are able to access confidential advice and support about well-being, relationships and sexual health. • All children and young people understand about consent, sexual consent and issues around abusive relationships. • Young people have the confidence and emotional resilience to understand the benefits of loving, healthy relationships and delaying sex. • All young people receive appropriate information and education to enable them to make informed decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Swindon Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy 2015 – 2020, Swindon's Health and Wellbeing Board, 2014</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle stigma and raise awareness in children and young people by working together to raise the profile of Mental Health Services, mental health conditions and resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Children and Young People's Mental Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015</i>

Unfortunately within the *Swindon Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy 2015 – 2020*, there is no mention of issues of sexual orientation or gender identity. I feel this is an oversight that we should address. According to the World Health Organization, sexual health is:

“...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is **not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity**. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.”

Traded Services would also expand to focus on transition from Year 6 to Year 7 for young people with identified needs either through group or 1-2-1 provision. Group work could be made available to parents/ carers in an effort to broaden communication with their children and increase their understanding of issues of CSE, FGM, domestic violence and abuse, sexual assault, sexual orientation, gender identities, using technology safely, emotional health and wellbeing and healthy relationships. Parents/ carers could be identified via SEMH, TaMHS, Social Care, schools, NSPCC, SHE Group, Troubled Families and the Family Service.

By expanding our support to parents/ carers on these topics, we move from a whole school approach, to a whole community approach.

Within the Swindon *Business Plan for Education*, it is identified that behavior within schools is a high risk to success that would impact the reputation of schools, Ofsted reports and the social consequences if pupils are not in school. Possible reasons offered include academies excluding more pupils, a lack of alternative provision and the weakness in SEMH provision. To mitigate the risk, the plan suggests “more effective working with schools”.

When a school makes a referral to SEMH, SEMH's remit is to facilitate schools to manage and support pupils within the school environment. A member of the school's staff team works alongside a member of the SEMH team for a maximum of 12 weeks, at which point, next steps will be discussed. SEMH has a graduated response which includes referral to appropriate outside agencies/professionals which is done as an early referral before a crisis occurs and the criteria for TaMHS would not be met. If students do not meet threshold, we could support them with the transition into secondary school and then put them on caseload if the problems persist. We would be able to provide a continuity of care for the young people on the edge of services, that may end up at EOTAS, TaMHS or YOT without additional support.

SEMH uses solution focused approaches, social stories and circle time to address issues of self-esteem resilience, understanding relationships, confidence building, anger management, anxiety, social skills, communication, bullying, transitions in addition to, building and sustaining friendships. This seems very similar to the work YES does with young people, so it would mean expanding our service into a younger target population of Year 6. SEMH also provides support for parents/ carers and we could offer the group work focusing on communications, emotional health and relationships. Due to the Ofsted reports citing Swindon schools as Inadequate or Requiring Improvement with aspects being connected to behavior and exclusion rates, the influx of £600,000 for school improvements may be a funding source for this work.

Procedures

A referral process which outlines the target population the request for service focuses on, will be necessary for both caseload work and group work. Young people may self-refer, but they must meet the referral criteria.

Early Help Record Assessments will be accepted as a method to demonstrate the appropriateness of the referral.

Next Steps

Although specific individuals within YES have the skills to deliver this work, it may be necessary to undergo training to broaden the base of skills. Training could be delivered by those currently possessing skills and experience as well as working with teams such as TaMHS, Educational Psychologists or SEMH to upskill the team.

Conclusion

If the *Children, Family & Community Health Early Help Business and Improvement Plan 2016 – 2017* outlines the expectation for services to prevent problems from escalating, we need to implement plans which move Upstream and have proven financial benefits.

CN YEW Team Proposal, Ideas and Questions

The Youth Engagement Service

The YEW service to remain the same.

YEWs to continue to deliver the same level of support to young people in Swindon.

We have discussed the following proposals and ideas for the future of the Youth Engagement Service.

Increasing outcomes for continued Troubled Families income

YEWs currently achieve the most outcomes for Troubled Families – A reduction in Youth Engagement Staff will directly impact the number of outcomes achieved and claims made for the troubled Families programme.

Maintaining the YEW service will improve the outcomes for Troubled Families and continue to generate income for Swindon Borough Council.

The Family Service

YEWS to offer support and work in partnership with The Family Service to deliver support to adolescence as YEWs have extensive knowledge on attachment, brain development and risk taking behaviour, alongside skills to engage the most 'hard to reach' and adolescence most at risk of social exclusion.

The Family service coordinators are continuing to identify young people who have identified safeguarding concerns but who do not meet the threshold for a statutory assessment. These young people are identified as needing a targeted intervention and are referred into the Youth Engagement service. Who will be supporting these young people if the YEW service is cut or dramatically reduced?

Trading in schools to generate an increased income

As a YEW service we can generate income through Trading in mainstream, specialist and alternative educational providers.

The BBC has published report in November 2016 that 'Children in Swindon failed by schools 'at every level'.'

Promoting the YEW service as a traded service will generate income to support those young people that are identified as having barriers to emotional social and economic wellbeing. We currently only offer this service to secondary schools.

There has been a request from Primary schools to have YEW support for those young people that are most at risk of exclusion and for those that are displaying high risk taking behaviour. There is currently not a service in Swindon that offers this support.

YEWs can offer tailored packages of support for early intervention subsequently impacting the number of young people that become disengaged in education and become NEET post 16.

Specialist areas of support

Within the YEW service there is multiple areas of expertise and qualification alongside extensive experience for working with young people.

YEWs to offer specialist support within schools, children's services and other agencies

For example:

- Special Educational Needs
- Careers advice
- EDBD support
- Teaching alternative curriculum programmes
- CSE
- Sex and Relationships
- Mental Health

Support for Year 6 Transition

YEWs to support primary school aged children with transition to secondary school placements. This can be a turbulent time for all children and specifically those with additional needs.

'A significant minority of children, especially those who are socially excluded or in chaotic, stressful or disadvantaged family settings, have to develop ways of coping that are much less well suited to the demands of school and secondary school in particular. For them, transition will be a much more difficult process.' Young Minds

YEWs to work with all Year 6 students to support transition – YEWs to complete Early Help assessment and plans for those who are most vulnerable but are not identified as meeting Child protection threshold.

YEWs to work with those identified as most at risk of transition – Children that are Looked after, those on a Child protection plan, those with an Early help record and plan.

'Transition, and the way schools work together with each other and with other agencies to manage transition, can influence children's future school careers and the climate and culture of the whole school community.' Young Minds

Support for Year 11 Transition

YEWs to work with all Year 11s identified at risk of having difficulties with transition or at risk of NEET.

YEWs to offer tailored packages of support and experienced careers advisors to support young people to develop participation in education and training. Subsequently, Working towards RPA (Education and skills Act) giving young people the opportunity to transition successfully from education to career to tackle youth unemployment.

Goldman Mellor et al (2016) found many of the NEET young people aged 18 exhibited issues such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse and aggression control in childhood, years before transition into adulthood, arguing that vulnerable young people need to be identified and supported through childhood and early adolescence to reduce their risk of becoming NEET and developing further social, emotional and economic problems in later life.

RPA in itself will not be sufficient to reduce the NEET population unless the complicating risk factors are addressed at an earlier opportunity.

Working with other services

YEW's identify and refer young people to specialist services – YEWs supporting young people and families to access support, attending appointments which directly impact positive outcomes. This could impact other service delivery.

Will services have the time and resource to spend on trying to engage the most hard to reach young people and families?

How will Social services deliver interventions and packages of support for those young people most at risk without our support?

YEWs continue to offer Tier 2 Mental health support for young people who are not able or ready to work with TAMHS. The YEW service is able to do this in a different way for those that are not able to meet the prescribed processes of TAMHs.

Vision - Swindon

There is an increasing population, House developments and a new secondary school. How will services develop and support the additional population?

In order to maintain Swindon's attraction for future residents and businesses our services will need to continue to tackle youth unemployment, develop attainment and attendance in education and work with those young people and families who are most vulnerable.

Children in Swindon failed by schools 'at every level' BBC News Report, 14th November 2016
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-37971338>

The Transition from Primary to Secondary School, How an understanding of mental health and emotional wellbeing can help children, schools and families. Training Resource Young Minds
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/assets/0000/1303/Transitionfromprimarytosecondary.pdf>

Goldman-Mellor, S., Caspi, A., Arseneault, L., Ajala, N., Ambler, A., Danese, A., Fisher, H., Hucker, A., Odgers, C., Williams, T., Wong, C. and Moffitt, T. (2016) Committed to work but vulnerable: self-perceptions and mental health in NEET 18-year olds from a contemporary British cohort. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 57 (2), pp. 196-203.