Youth Ideas & Action
developments in youth service

No. 4   September 2005

Youth Ideas & Action aims to disseminate information about staff development and service provision to young people. QLP-Y participants are encouraged to submit items for inclusion in future issues.

Contents

QLP-Y Development Day

The Development Day takes place at the Management Research Centre of the London Metropolitan University on 13 October. Please send any items you wish to be included in the Agenda. All Quality Leaders, mentors, sponsors and members of QLP-Y teams welcome. Please confirm attendance.

Ideas for audience development workshop

In the second issue of *Youth Ideas & Action* (May, 2005), we provided some examples of audience development workshops and activities. In this issue, we give a programme for workshops in website development from YouthWorks. Saif Bonar from YouthWorks will give a short presentation on these proposals at the next Development Day on 13 October when you will be able to get clarifications on the proposals. If you would like to include website development as one of the activities for your service development proposals, please include this in your submission to Dean.

Green Paper: Youth Matters set to progress straight on to legislation stage

By Tom Lloyd - 14/09/05
Reproduced from "Young People Now"
<http://www.ypnmagazine.com/news/index.cfm?fuseaction=full_news&ID=8208>
Accessed: 17 September, 2005

The youth green paper is likely to move straight from its current consultation stage to proposals for legislation, without the intermediate step of a white paper.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is in discussions with youth work organisations about the details of the Youth Matters green paper. Consultation runs until 4 November, and particular attention is being given to the creation of a duty on local authorities to provide services for young people.

In Youth Matters, the Government said it would legislate to clarify the duty on local authorities to provide positive activities for all young people, and issue statutory guidance on activities young people can expect.

Tom Wylie, chief executive of The National Youth Agency, said it is important that the duty is seen as a "clarification and modernisation" of existing duties rather than a new burden on local authorities.

He highlighted the array of existing duties contained in diverse pieces of legislation, such as the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2002 and others that date from before the Second World War, and said these need to be updated.

'Give voice and choice to young people'

A response to the government's youth green paper
From: The National Youth Agency
http://www.nya.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=91947
Accessed 17 September, 2005

Tom Wylie, Chief Executive of The National Youth Agency, said: 'The green paper has many positive features, not least the proposals to involve young people in decision-making, drawing on The NYA's set of standards for youth participation, *Hear By Right.* But the green paper will only make a difference if young people can tell us it's different. The NYA will ask them!'

He continued: 'A young person spends 9 minutes of every waking hour in school, the remaining 51 minutes outside of the classroom. *Youth Matters* is a measured response from government to deal with the huge challenge of coordinating provision and services for teenagers out of school hours, placing a clear duty on local authorities, working in partnership with others, to build safe and cohesive communities. Now it needs to be backed with substantial investment to ensure its vision becomes a reality.'

The NYA will run consultations with young people and youth workers in England to develop a detailed response to the green paper. This will include a national survey by http://www.youthinformation.com/, the UK's most popular youth facing website. The

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Government's consultation period runs until 4 November.

YouthWorks

Website Development Programme
QLP-Y Pilot: 2005 - 2006

YouthWorks is a new company that works with young people on technology and communications projects. We have created an informal package which allows young people to plan, build and maintain their own website or online magazine with minimal input from us.

All you need to take part is a group of interested young people, lots of fresh ideas and a can do attitude. Your site will be created and maintained completely by your group – we provide a one day introduction and planning session and then offer monthly online workshops and provide support materials and advice – the rest is up to you.

Your challenge will involve planning and designing your site, creating a structure for it and then sourcing regular content, stories and features for it on an ongoing basis. You can be as imaginative or creative as you want and include anything from message-boards through to surveys, games, quizzes and almost anything else you like.

You should have access to a computer and internet - either in your library, at your youth club or school – or maybe even at home. You will meet your group to brainstorm and plan the future of your site. You will need to speak to your youth worker or librarian about finding a suitable meeting space and making sure you have regular access to a computer.

For more information on the programme and details of the next introduction day in your area then please contact your youth worker or librarian. You could also contact us by email at info@ywks.org and we will pass your details onto the relevant contact in your area.

Website Development Programme - 2005 Pilot

Contact Details
Telephone: 0870 199 5764
Mobile: 07966 960 625
E-mail: info@ywks.org
Web: www.ywks.org

Summary

This document outlines proposals for a pilot version of a versatile web development programme for young people. The programme can be delivered in conjunction with an accreditation framework such as UK Youth's Youth Achievement Awards or the Millennium Volunteers programme. At this stage participation in the pilot is being offered exclusively to QLP-Y participants.

Overview

YouthWorks has put together a pilot programme for use with young people from QLP-Y participating authorities. The cost effective programme will enable participation of many groups of young people who will plan, create and operate their own websites.

The programme can be used in support of accredited learning programmes such as the Youth Achievement Awards and Millennium Volunteers.

Our service includes the provision of an initial induction session for each group of young people where they will meet their online mentors and discuss their project. After the induction session fortnightly online support sessions will be provided and an online bulletin board will also be operated offering support and suggestions to young people.

We will supply all required infrastructure and ongoing mentoring and support. This web development programme gives young people an opportunity to work as a team and build a feature-rich and fully functioning website which they will be encouraged to continue developing together over a period of months or years. It should be seen as a tool for young people to develop their skills and interests in any area and not a technology programme.

Programme Outcomes

- Upon completion participants will be competent in a range of IT & Communication key skills Criteria.

- Participants can improve soft skills such as team working, time management, negotiation, reasoning and planning.

- Participants will take ownership of a dynamic website created entirely by them.

- Participants will be responsible for the full project including planning, development, testing and ongoing maintenance. YouthWorks advisors will only be directly involved in exceptional circumstances.

- Participants will gain access to a comprehensive suite of online tools and support services including a monthly online workshop for one year.

Programme Outline

Introductory Day - Induction: 2 Hours (45 minutes on half day)

Participants will be asked to familiarise themselves with the online tools and support resources and will participate in a number of ice breakers.

Key Outcomes

- Participants will learn the basics of copyright, trademarks and essential online safety tips.

- Participants will understand a number of technical phrases.

- Participants will familiarise themselves with online support systems and utilities available

Site Planning: 5 Hours (2.5 Hours on half day)

Here we look at planning and preparation for creating a website. The group will choose a topic, identify aims and objectives and define the structure and content of their site, they will also consider their role and put their ideas on paper creating a sitemap and plan.

Key Outcomes

- Participants will learn about search engines and directories and share details of how they locate information online.
- Participants will discuss trends in internet use and consider who will use their site and what information to provide.
- Participants will gain insight into the website planning and preparation process.
- Participants will create a project plan and site-map

Online Workshops

Online support workshops will be held monthly. Participants will be able to ask questions and get instant guidance. They will also be able to meet online as a group and connect with other groups around the country and share ideas, information and lessons while meeting new people.

Key Outcomes

- Participants will be able to get support and advice with technical issues and guidance in creating their website.
- Participants will gain additional technical and non-technical skills which can be applied in a variety of settings.
- Participants will gain further insight into the website creation and management process.

Costs

During the pilot YouthWorks will keep costs to a minimum. The costs outlined below cover the introduction, domain registration and hosting and ongoing support and administration of participants.

- Full day Introduction - £265.00
- Half Day Introduction - £165.00
- Registration and administration fee per website – £6.50 per month
- Ongoing support & participation - £2.65 per participant per month

Notes

- Inductions can be carried out on a partnership basis with two authorities

- Introduction days can be delivered to no more than 40 participants
- Minimum of 10 participants per authority
- The programme structure, content and outline can be customised
- Prices quoted are valid for pilot phase and only until 31st April 2006

To discuss your requirements in more detail please contact us.

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NYA Sets Government Challenge for Youth Entitlement

From: http://www.nya.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=91876
Accessed: 17 September, 2005

The National Youth Agency has challenged government to show more 'respect' for young people and invest in youth work to support their personal and social development. Speaking at its joint conference with the Local Government Association, Tom Wylie, Chief Executive, set out the framework of entitlement for young people. He said:

"The modern day pressures and expectations of young people run high. The transition from childhood to adulthood can be blurred. Yet the political response all too often characterises young people as potential troublemakers. In calling for greater 'respect' from young people, the government must in turn provide them with a clear entitlement to support and to universal youth services. Fundamentally, government funding for statutory and voluntary youth work must be sustained over time to allow change and improvement to become embedded."

The NYA's framework is based on the following principles of 'respect':

Relevant - a balance between universal provision that support young people to develop at their own pace, specialist services in adolescence and targeted services for early intervention for the most vulnerable.

Entitlement - a clarity about the entitlement of young people to particular opportunities and a clear curriculum statement to reshape plans for the individual needs of the young person.

Sustainable - there is already a patchwork of funding from over 40 grant sources; unless funding is secure and largely channelled to improve current youth services, provision will be further fragmented.

Participation - young people should be fully involved in the design, delivery and quality assurance of services, to promote the voice, influence and choices of young people themselves so that they 'feel' the relevance of the offer.

Evidenced - explicit responsibility at all points in the system, with accreditation, training and quality assurance in youth work, for effective planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Community - services must be accessible in location and design to diverse individuals and groups, for local determination within national frameworks providing high quality youth work in a variety of settings across the community.

Transitions - young people's lives do not follow a smooth path, transitions to adult life are more complex now than in the previous twenty years. All young people need 'someone to speak to' on their own terms, in the actuality of their lives. It is the voluntary engagement of the young person and the quality of the youth worker that often makes the greatest difference.

Libraries, young people and QLP-Y

By

Dave Percival
Quality Leader, Portsmouth
September, 2005

To be published in *bis,* Bibliotek i Samhälle (BiS: Libraries in Society).
http://www.foreningenbis.org/English/history.html

It would appear, on paper at least, that public libraries in Britain have "discovered" young people. Interest in the 13-24 year old - long overdue - has come about from two fronts, the practical and the ideological. On the one hand there is the politically expedient realisation that public libraries - with their aging workforce and correspondingly aging readership – are unsustainable. According to a recent study, nearly a third of all present library staff are due to retire in the next ten years. (MLA 2005) In this self-preservation paradigm, the problem facing service managers is how this neglected audience can be reached and their presence in libraries maintained. Whilst most libraries authorities have at least a nominal collection of youth book titles, and some make cursory attempts to provide youth-friendly décor, young people in public libraries are mostly noticeable by their absence. Such tokenism in their approach explains that while there are undoubtedly some centres of excellence in British libraries, youth provision is patchy at best and at worst, non-existent.

On the other hand, as recent documents on public libraries in the new century have shown, there can and should be much more creative approaches to service provision in the twenty-first century. In this transformational paradigm, there have been calls to make sure that libraries evolve from being merely passive service providers for those "persons desiring to make use thereof", as enshrined in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (nowadays the overwhelmingly white, middle class and elderly core users of our libraries) to providing a more relevant and socially inclusive service, truly open to all. (Muddiman et al 2000)

This article focuses on some of the recent debate surrounding young people, and why they are a socially excluded group. It also examines the extent that public libraries can currently engage young people, and how the Quality Leaders Project – Youth provides a framework for libraries (in partnership with youth services) to begin to adequately address these issues.

Discriminated youth

Young people, or perhaps it is more correct to say *working class* young people, have always caused the state concern. Today, the mainstream media has cranked up the hysteria levels, in a way that echoes their reporting of asylum seekers and refugees, demonising (and often criminalising) them collectively. The rise in the number of ASBOs (anti-social behaviour orders) or the lesser sanction of ABCs (anti-social behaviour contracts) has led to an alarming tendency to focus solely on the problems when they arise and not the social structures that cause these problems to arise in the first place.

It is in this climate that the Bluewater shopping centre in Kent famously banned young people from wearing baseball caps, hooded tops and swearing in May 2005. (BBC 2005) Tony Blair immediately (and unsurprisingly, given the interdependence of the state and its media) jumped on the bandwagon with the announcement of his "reform and respect" agenda. The hypocrisy of this is indicative of the current New Labour administration. Despite the fact that young people are portrayed as being anti-social, lazy, overweight and non-political, tens of thousands of young people must have put down their Playstations and marched against their government's plans to attack Iraq! At what point was respect shown to them (and the rest of us, for that matter) as the Bush and Blair unholy alliance continued? And where is the respect to be found in the assault on civil liberties, particularly affecting young Muslim men as a result of the recent terrorist attacks in London?

Young people in Britain are assessed and examined more than ever before at school. It is an educational system with emphases that are clearly failing many students. A recent report has suggested that only fifty-five per cent of boys will move on to secondary education (at 11 years plus) with sufficient writing ability to cope with the curriculum. (Halpin 2005) Even those students who manage to do well out of the system and achieve "A" level qualifications, rather than congratulated, are year upon year told that the reason for their success is that the exam is getting easier!

Libraries and young people

It can be no real surprise, bearing in mind the factors outlined above, that some young people show reluctance to engage with official institutions. Although it would be difficult to argue amongst ourselves that increased access to books and information can improve outcomes, how do we communicate to young people that libraries might be a place that they would voluntarily visit? Outreach can spread the word, and get young people through the doors, but the challenge for us is to provide a service that ensures return visits.

My feeling is that present teenage collections of books are rather too safe, and rather highbrow. We need to be less concerned with literary merit and other notions of quality based on personal value judgements, and less scared of provoking controversy by seeking out non-book material, fanzines, and other "alternative" titles. If literacy is an issue for young people then we can have as many wonderful novels on our shelves as we like but they will have no impact if few people can read them. If anything, such material will put them off ever coming in again. Put quite simply, material for young people should be chosen by young people.

If young people do take an interest in any of the material on the shelves, and want to take it away, they will usually have to go through a lengthy and prohibitive joining procedure to

become a library member. More than likely they will be expected to get a parent or carer to sign on their behalf. There are many parents or carers who do not want to do this for various reasons, and as a result young teenagers find themselves excluded from the service almost immediately.

There are also problems with the free internet access that libraries provide as part of the so-called "People's Network". In our library authority, and in common with many others, we insist that a parent or carer signs a consent form on behalf of the young person. As with library membership procedures, if a parent or carer does not want to know, the young person is effectively barred from ICT in libraries. Aside from the fundamental issues of *how* the young user accesses library facilities, there is the related question of *what* they can access. Official institutions, in their advocacy statements still trumpet the People's Network as a transforming presence in public libraries, providing free access to internet and other computer facilities. (MLA 2004) In fact, some library authorities *do* charge users for access to the People's Network, although this practice was at least met with some disapproval in the recent Parliamentary Select Committee Report on Libraries. It is argued that the increased availability of ICT in libraries has increased our credibility amongst the public, many of which previously were non-users. It is undoubtedly the case that many members of our society, for example asylum seekers and refugees, have found real value in the People's Network. Unfortunately, as has been pointed out, it would appear that many people who access the technology in libraries have access to computers elsewhere. (Pateman 2003) The divide between information rich, information poor increases further where those who have computers at home can look at whatever they want, whilst those who have no other means of access are limited by library censorship.

Our own professional organisation, in their recent report *Start With The Child* (CILIP 2002), stated that we should provide "services that are relevant and responsive" and provide young people with "opportunities to take responsibility, and exercise freedom of choice". This is hardly reflected in current practice where there is flagrant discrimination imposed by measures to limit the content of the internet. This is achieved by filtering or more insidiously by the use of "walled gardens", which effectively reduces the world wide web to a few sites deemed suitable for young people by librarians. No wonder then, that young people often have negative experiences of public libraries. Instead of addressing child protection concerns through training young people to use the internet safely, the tendency is for public libraries to virtually pull the plug on internet access for them.

Then of course, there is the issue of staffing. In any discussion of library staff and young people, the usual stereotypes are heard from both groups. However, recruiting staff because they are young will not necessarily improve things for the better if attitudes towards young people and their needs remain the same. There needs to be a seismic shift in the culture of public libraries and the public service they provide. This is the social and library-related context of young people in Britain and it is also why the Quality Leaders Project-Youth (QLP-Y) could not have been more prescient.

Quality Leaders Project - Youth

The long awaited government green paper on young people *Youth Matters*, was published in July and QLP-Y will help those of us participating with the main areas of challenge that the paper identifies

- engaging more young people in positive activities and empowering them to shape the services they receive;
- encouraging more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities;
- providing better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives; and

- providing better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble. (DfES 2005, 5)

QLP began some years ago and addresses the dual challenges of providing library services for all communities *and* providing equal employment opportunities. The first strand of the project looked at library services to black and minority ethnic groups (and the corresponding need for those working in libraries to mirror the communities that they serve). QLP-Youth is now run as a partnership between the Department of Applied Social Sciences (DASS) and the Management Research Centre (MRC), both at the London Metropolitan University. The project is funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) who support "organisations which aim to maximise opportunities for individuals to experience a full quality of life, both now and in the future". PHF "are concerned with children and young people, and others who are disadvantaged". They make it clear that they "prefer to support work which others may find hard to fund, perhaps because it is breaks new ground, is too risky or is unpopular". (PHF 2005)

The QLP-Y programme is one of "management development through service development" which provides double benefits - the development of staff as well as development of services to young people. In addition, the programme involves consulting young people in developing services they need, and also develops partnership with the Youth Service. There is a strong "audience development" element to the programme which helps to connect creatively with young people not previously reached.

Portsmouth Library Service joined QLP-Y as the second phase of the project was beginning. This has meant that we have been playing catch-up to some extent with the other authorities that have been involved since the start, undertaking consultation with many groups of young people on their terms, away from library settings.

Other participating authorities in QLP-Y are Knowsley, Liverpool, Lincolnshire, Barnet and Haringey. With the exception of Liverpool, where the Quality Leader is from the Youth Service, the participating authorities are led by personnel from the library service, in partnership with the youth service.

Portsmouth has a population of around 189,000 and with an area of forty square kilometres it has the greatest population density of any British city outside London. Portsmouth is a city where many social inequalities are evident, scoring relatively highly in the English Indices of Deprivation Index. Famous as the home of the Royal Navy, the dockyard is today suffering from a decline in fortunes. Of some relevance to libraries and Portsmouth, there is also a proud literary heritage. Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, HG Wells and Rudyard Kipling spent a small amount of time in the city and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote the first two Sherlock Holmes novels here. However, one sometimes senses that the city directs too much of its energies and resources in celebrating the past, at the expense of providing for the future. According to the Deprivation Index, Portsmouth is ranked 88th (out of 354 local authorities) in England. 27 areas in Portsmouth are in the most deprived 20% nationally. (ODPM 2004, 165)

Much of our consultation for QLP-Y has been undertaken through many face-to-face discussions with young people across the city, beginning in the Portsea area. Later this year, the present Portsea Library will move to a much bigger location in a newly built community centre. This will be the first new library in Portsmouth for fourteen years. As such it presents us with an ideal opportunity to have local young people decide on the type of library service *they* would like (as opposed to what the librarians would like!). Similarly, the old Portsea Youth Club will move from its current premises right next door to the library in the new building. Since September last year, I have been visiting the youth club on a regular basis, introducing some of the more interesting items that the library service has in stock, but more importantly introducing myself and getting to know the young people and youth workers. There was some understandable resentment from the young people in

that whilst their youth club was decreasing in size, the library (which most of them did not use) was increasing its floor space substantially.

Working with colleagues in the youth service, a written survey was piloted at the club. One of the underlying needs of young people, emerging from discussion here and in the wider community, is the need for improvement in literacy skills. As Britain is one of the few countries in the "developed" world where young people have lower levels of literacy than adults, this is not a surprising discovery. That the young people were as candid as they were regarding their literacy skills was a revelation.

As well as being responsible for library provision to young adults, I also work with children who are in care in Portsmouth, living with foster parents or in residential units. Running parallel with the consultation in youth centres, secondary schools and special schools, I have spent nearly eighteen months introducing high interest material and getting to know the young people and their carers or care workers. I have been extremely fortunate in having no time constraints placed on me, as the process of building relationships with young people can be slow. Working with vulnerable young people has also made it imperative that the library service has forged links with colleagues in Social Services and Education departments.

Generally we have found that young people relish the opportunity to make their views heard, but there is some consultation fatigue because so many agencies are required (quite rightly and properly) to get a "youth" perspective on things. Young people are of course as sceptical as anyone that their suggestions will be acted upon. The library and youth service now has the responsibility to make good the participation of the city's young people. How we intend to do justice to their comments will become clear in the second phase of QLP-Y where we hope to have young people on steering groups to manage the audience development workshops. It is also our intention that the new library will open simultaneously with the youth club at least once a week and that we will be able to have some volunteers from the youth club helping to run the library.

I believe that QLP-Youth will make a significant contribution to our library service, by increasing levels of participation by young people, empowering them by giving them the confidence to air their views, and most importantly ensure that they are taken seriously. For far too long, public libraries in Britain have been run from above, with only the views of an extant readership taken into account. QLP gives young people a real chance to affect change from below and I sincerely believe that a change in the way libraries deliver their services to young people and other socially excluded groups will help bring about the fundamental social changes in wider society that we all desire.

Dave Percival (personal capacity)

Further details on QLP are available from: http://www.seapn.org.uk/qlp.html

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UK Youth website

UK Youth exists to develop and promote innovative non-formal education programmes for and with young people - working with them to develop their potential.

Their network supports more than 750,000 young people, 7000 youth groups, clubs and projects and more than 40,000 volunteer and part-time youth workers throughout the UK.

Check out UK Youth website at: <http://www.youth.org.uk/>.

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