

# **Doers and Shapers – Young people's volunteering and engagement in public services**

**An evaluation report of the Beacon  
Councils' Positive Youth Engagement Peer  
Support Programme**

Prepared by

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**2006-2007**  
*Positive Youth Engagement  
(in the Community and  
Democratic Process)*

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1: The aims and approach of this evaluation</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 Introduction	11
1.2 The Beacon PYE Peer Support partnerships	12
1.3 The focus for the evaluation	12
<b>Section 2: The design and methodology of the study</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Examining the policy context	15
2.2 Establishing baseline positions & implementation issues	15
2.3 Exploring the perceptions of the young people involved	16
2.4 Exploring the views of adult stakeholders at local level	17
2.5 Ethical issues	18
<b>Section 3: The context of policy and research – a summary of the literature review</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1 The literature review	19
3.2 National strategic partners	19
3.3 Volunteering and participation definitions	19
3.4 Volunteering	20
3.5 Young people’s participation in decision-making and service delivery	22
3.6 Citizenship	23
3.7 The ‘Aiming High’ Youth Strategy	24
3.8 The nature and extent of youth volunteering	25
3.9 Motivation	25
3.10 Reaching disadvantaged young people and the barriers to volunteering	27
3.11 Participation in local governance and service delivery	29
3.12 Structures involved in youth governance	32
<b>Section 4: The scope and reach of the programme</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 The varied approaches of the local partnerships	36
4.2 Types of volunteering and engagement undertaken	37
4.3 Reaching socially excluded young people	40
4.4 Reaching into public services to create new opportunities for volunteering and engagement	41
4.5 How the schemes were promoted	42
4.6 How the programme related to the priorities of the local authorities	43
4.7 Exit strategies and referral of young people to further opportunities	43
<b>Section 5: The personal benefits to the young people</b>	<b>45</b>
5.1 Evidence from the young people’s questionnaires	45
5.2 Evidence from the focus groups and interviews with young people	46

5.3 Evidence from adults about the benefits to the young people	50
<b>Section 6: Barriers and solutions</b>	52
6.1 Difficulties encountered	52
6.2 Barriers facing particular groups	54
6.3 How adults perceived the barriers	58
6.4 Key barriers	58
6.5 Dealing with the barriers	61
6.6 The critical issue of 'support' for the young people	64
6.7 Suggestions on good practice from young people	68
<b>Section 7: Evidence of impact on public services</b>	71
7.1 Response from workers and stakeholders	71
7.2 Evidence on youth involvement frameworks	73
7.3 Concrete examples of change	73
<b>Section 8: Implications for strategy, resources and infrastructure</b>	77
8.1 Resource allocation	77
8.2 Planning and timetabling	78
8.3 Staffing and infrastructure	79
8.4 Conclusions	80
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A – Summary of scheme achievements against the baselines agreed at 2007	83
Appendix B – how the schemes involved young people as volunteers	111
Appendix C – List of adult respondents	112
Appendix D – References	115
Appendix E – Relevant recommendations from the Russell Commission	117
<b>Figures and tables</b>	
Figure 4.1 Types of volunteering in which young people said they were involved	38
Figure 5.1 Percentage of young people responding who said they had experienced particular benefits	45
Figure 6.1 Difficulties young people said they faced	52
Figure 6.2 Difficulties identified by adults	60
Figure 6.3 Key barriers to youth engagement and means of addressing them	63
Figure 7.1 Positive incidents – responses on where the impact was felt	71
Figure 7.2 Differences the scheme made to service delivery	72

# Positive Youth Engagement: Review and Evaluation of the Beacon Council Peer Support Programme 2007-9.

## Executive summary

This evaluation assesses the impact of the two-year **Beacon Positive Youth Engagement Peer Support Programme** and the learning to be drawn from it. The programme was designed to fulfil **the Russell Commission recommendation to maximise the potential of young volunteers in public services**. The Peer Support Programme drew funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Office for the Third Sector at the Cabinet Office to spread the good practice on positive youth engagement beyond the original eight Beacon councils to other local authorities. In all 23 local authorities were involved in the programme: the eight original youth engagement **Beacon Councils** each undertook to work with one or two **partner authorities**.

In particular, the programme was designed to address the Russell Commission recommendations relating to the public sector. Recommendation 9 speaks of the need to unlock the potential for young volunteers to give additional help in the delivery of public services such as hospitals, schools, parks and sports, leisure and arts centres. It draws attention not only to the need to encourage greater levels of volunteering within public services but also to maximise the particular opportunities to involve young people in shaping local services and as active citizens in local democracy. It saw young people not just as potential **'doers'** but also as potential **'shapers'** of services.

The work was also intended to help meet the target of **Public Service Agreement 4, 2004 (PSA4)**, which was to "increase voluntary and community engagement, especially amongst those at risk of social exclusion". The programme therefore concentrated on authorities in the priority regions for PSA4 and chiefly on its three risk groups "people with no qualifications, minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities". There was also an emphasis on young people not in training, education or employment (NEET) and looked after young people (LAC).

The **Youth Affairs Unit** at De Montfort University was commissioned in July 2007 to undertake the role of **research partner** to review and evaluate the two-year Peer Support Programme. The evaluation focuses on marshalling the evidence to answer the following **key questions about the programme**:

- To what extent did the programme succeed in creating opportunities for young people to volunteer in local authority and public service contexts to help deliver services and to assist in shaping or improving them?
- Did the programme succeed in reaching the PSA4 target groups and other socially excluded young people?
- Is there evidence that young people gained from their participation and if so, in what ways did they benefit?
- What barriers were identified in relation to young people's involvement in volunteering and engagement, especially for the socially excluded groups? Do particular barriers exist for specific groups?

- What solutions were found to overcome those barriers?
- What worked well in enhancing youth engagement and in what circumstances?
- Is there any evidence of the impact of the young volunteers on the quality of public services? Are there concrete examples of change brought about through their participation in the local schemes?
- What implications, if any, are there for the strategies, resources and infrastructure of local government necessary to achieve effective youth involvement in public services?

The **main elements of the methodology** for the study were as follows:

- Examining and summarising the policy context and previous research on youth volunteering and engagement.
- Tracking baseline positions and progress with the Beacon authorities.
- Exploring the perceptions of the young people involved, the nature of their commitment, the benefits they might have gained, the barriers they encountered and how they were overcome, and a range of demographic details through questionnaires, individual or small group interviews, and focus groups on the legacy of the programme. 118 young people returned questionnaires; over 40 were interviewed individually and more than 70 were involved in the focus groups.
- Collecting the views of adult stakeholders through questionnaires, individual interviews and meetings, and records made of positive incidents. 76 questionnaire returns were received and over 70 adults were interviewed, including representatives of the national volunteering partners.

Qualitative records of interviews and groups were analysed for the main themes such as evidence of benefit to the young people or of concrete change in authority practice. The quantitative responses were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) though statistical validity cannot be attributed to the findings as the samples were neither random nor necessarily fully representative.

Young people in the Beacon partnerships undertook **a wide range of volunteering and engagement activities** including placement in local authority departments, peer inspection or mystery shopping to improve services, arts based presentations on the issues facing young people, representation on bodies for particular target groups such as looked after young people, and involvement in numerous decision-making and democratic structures. Although the young people would not always use the term 'volunteering' for what they did, all these activities fell within the definition used in the study. This was drawn from the Commission on the Future of Volunteering (2008) which identified at least four types of engagement in volunteering, all of which were evident in one or other of the Beacon projects:

- Mutual aid or self-help;
- Philanthropy or service to others (which may be formal volunteering in clubs or organisations or informal volunteering, simply helping others in the community);

- Participation (which includes involvement in political or decision-making processes on a voluntary basis at any level such as being a board member, on a users' forum, or a youth representative);
- Advocacy and campaigning.

The findings show **evidence of clear benefits to the young people**. The questionnaires asked about their gains. The highest response was for a perception that they had 'gained new skills' (89%), closely followed by feeling more confident (87.3%), having learned to work in a team (85%) and having made new friends (84.7%). The lowest response relatively speaking was for the young people feeling they understood 'more about how the Council works' (66.9%). While this is low in comparison to other responses, it is still a strong response given the general lack of awareness amongst young people of the functions of local government.

This was confirmed by examples given in focus groups and interviews of:

Gains in confidence

- *"I'm more confident and knowledgeable. What I have got out of this is more confidence with my speaking and I feel I am being heard and my world does mean something."*

Improved social skills, making friends

- *"From coming here I have gained qualification in participation with young people and communications skills. I have gained security and friends."*

Experience for CV, employment related skills and job search

- *"I have been able to gain other skills for example I have taken part in a youth participation course and peer mentoring course. This is helping my CV and myself in the future and I have also met new people."*
- *"I can now be confident in an office environment. I can do all of what has been asked of me over the eight weeks and basic admin work."*
- *"I know how to be more professional."*

Being able to make a positive contribution

- *"I've been able to make a positive contribution which will improve my immediate society [in this borough]. I've also learnt how to work as a team. I've also got great training opportunities."*
- *"New people will come in and you will help them out. We are getting older ourselves – it's a cycle of teaching the next people who come."*

Having fun

- *"Have fun and trips we choose like bowling, rock climbing, eating out. Something positive to do."*

Learning to mix with people from other backgrounds

- *"I can talk to different people with more confidence."*
- *"Cultural issues – less stereotypical."*
- *"Respect and knowledge of different people."*

Specific technical skills

- [The computer programme] – *"I couldn't work that. It's used to analyse answers to questions. I couldn't do it. The man who came to train us was dead boring. Probably my own fault because I didn't listen. But with the support of the team I did learn."*

Specific awards or accreditation

Wider knowledge of local services and provision

- *“I have gained knowledge of things that I would have been oblivious of [events in the borough].”*
- *“Not scared, maybe a bit wary. Before I went I didn’t really know what a councillor was.”*

The interviews with young people produced ample confirmation of the main benefits of the schemes in raising their confidence, and improving their social and job related skills. Examples given showed subtle relationships between their improved self-image and how they fared in other contexts.

The research also confirmed **the main barriers to engagement in the eyes of the young people** as including: the timescale to achieve results; personal time factors; the commitment required; problems in handling relationships; poor responses from adults; transport, which was the most significant practical issue, raised many times; having to speak up in public; lack of recognition and the formality of certain meetings.

The particular target groups of the programme did face specific difficulties but they also had many general issues in common. They all shared a fear that adults would view them in stereotypical ways. They feared being judged or dismissed as having nothing to contribute. In broad terms they also faced institutionalised hurdles in the lack of resources to meet their specific needs or the failure to adapt service responses in the way they needed.

Taking the evidence from young people and adults overall, the study suggests that the **critical barriers to youth volunteering and engagement** are:

- × A lack of skilled support to ensure that young people can sustain the effort and surmount the difficulties;
- × The cost of transport, its availability and the distances in rural areas;
- × The frustrations from the length of time needed to achieve change;
- × A failure to embed youth volunteering and engagement fully in local authority systems;
- × The prejudice and discrimination sometimes faced by minority target groups and their consequent fears about a lack of acceptance;
- × Failure to deploy resources to meet specific needs or to adapt service responses for particular groups;
- × The time and commitment required, set against the natural mobility of young people as they progress through education and career development and the demands on their time;
- × The time required on the part of adults to set up volunteering and engagement and support it properly;
- × A lack of skills on the part of some adults in informal approaches to meetings, publicity and relationships with the young people who volunteer.

None of these barriers appeared to be insurmountable, given adequate planning, a sensitive use of resources and sufficient support from skilled

workers. The question of 'support' emerged as particularly important and was analysed in some detail to see what young people meant by it. It included:

- Understanding, empathy, listening, trust
- Approachability and flexibility, sustained relationships
- Challenging young people to progress and achieve, allowing young people to take on lead roles, not taking over or interfering
- Regularity, organisation, structure and continuity of support
- The group work skills of workers
- Rehearsing young people for roles they found difficult
- Practical issues and resources
- Enjoyment and mutual support from other young people

From a young person's point of view therefore, support is a complex amalgam of the worker's ability to create trust and keep confidence; to listen effectively and maintain a positive pro-active view of the young person's potential, regardless of their background; to be available and reliable within known boundaries; and to resolve practical and resource issues. These are not specialist skills but taken together they make a distinctive skill set.

There was also clear evidence of **benefits to the participating authorities** and of concrete changes in service delivery brought about by young people's participation. Examples included:

- Changes in attitudes of staff towards young people and the mind-set about the value of involving them.  
*"It has helped me; I am a bloke in a suit... My nervousness at the beginning about engaging with young people... I overcomplicated it maybe. I needed just to do it."*
- Physical improvements to premises being made or investigated.
- Changes to practice occurred in sexual health clinics such as improvements in demonstrations with condom distribution.
- Several services had young volunteers who had not only increased capacity to deliver but had also given important feedback on how the services were seen by the public, how to recruit young staff, and how to involve minority communities.  
*"We did not have any young, under-18s, as volunteers here at all. Now we have two and are consulting them about some of our audience development work. The feedback from the young people helped our research and recommendations."*  
*"Some young people come with enthusiasm and commitment and are like a breath of fresh air to your organisation."*
- Young people consulted and involved in recycling initiatives.
- Young people in one authority had engaged with the Youth Offending Service to improve reception and information. Volunteers were also using their experience as victims of knife crime to talk to young people who carry knives or who have been involved with at risk groups.
- Library staff had received training on using arts based consultation processes with young people. There was anecdotal evidence of increased library usage by young people.



- Homeless young people had given presentations to a Council committee about the issues they faced around accommodation. Members agreed to follow up on these needs in the work on the housing strategy.
- Young people had shared in staff recruitment and in one authority young people had become part of the assessment process during commissioning for the Children and Young People's Directorate.

The **headline conclusions of the study** for local authorities and government departments wishing to promote youth volunteering and engagement in shaping and improving in public services, were as follows:

- **Young people can and do contribute to the delivery and shaping of local authority services in many different and equally valid ways**, including formal volunteering or service to others; mutual aid or self-help; participation, with involvement in political or decision-making processes on a voluntary basis; and advocacy or campaigning.
- Young people **do not necessarily term all of these activities 'volunteering'** but they do clearly see themselves as giving their own time and energy without pay in the service of others.
- The **benefits** gained by young people can be considerable. These are felt especially in **confidence and self-esteem**, and the acquisition of **new skills for self-efficacy and for the labour market**. The impact on young people of knowing they had 'made a positive contribution' to their own local area in some way was very marked.
- Whether volunteering in public services or engaging in participation schemes to shape them, **young people** experience not only personal development but **gain specific skills needed in the workplace** such as team work, clear communication, listening well, taking an interest and being eager to learn, an ability to take criticism, problem solving, literacy and numeracy.
- There was no evidence that it was too difficult or impossible to involve certain groups. The **support of skilled workers is** however **essential to drawing in the most disadvantaged target groups** and enabling them to derive maximum benefit from volunteering and engagement.
- The **benefits to the public sector** can also be substantial **not only in assisting the delivery of services but in making them more responsive**, as envisaged in the Russell report. Young people from under-represented groups can help in making services more accurately tailored to the needs of particular groups. The study also showed examples of concrete change achieved as a result of young people's involvement and influence.
- **Schemes need to be adequately resourced** in order to demonstrate these benefits to the full. Resources need to be awarded **with an**

**adequate timeframe** from external funders. Internally allocations need to be made not only for practical requirements such as travel or staffing but long-term investment is also needed to improve all forms of access more generally. The investment required is significant. If at all possible it needs to be mainstreamed.

- In order to achieve maximum value from that investment, schemes need to be sustained indefinitely and **embedded in the culture of the local authority**. Positive outcomes become cumulative when programmes are continued in the long-term.
- Long-term commitment to youth engagement on the part of an authority can help to diminish the frustration often felt by young people about how long it can take to achieve change. In a sustained scheme, young people may be able to see that they are **part of a succession of effort** to make things better for other young people and that they can hand the baton on to others when age, education or career make it necessary to move on.
- **Young people need support** from skilled and committed workers **in order to overcome the barriers they face and realise the potential of engagement and volunteering**. 'Support skills' are multi-faceted and it should not be taken for granted that all workers will have them: **these skills need fostering, development and recognition**.
- In accordance with the Russell Report, **young people should not lose out financially by volunteering**. Support should include practical resources especially the provision of **transport** or help with travel expenses.
- Preparation, training of adults, culture change around expectations, and positive attitudes towards young people's participation take time to deliver and **short, fixed-term programmes are less likely to get these foundations properly laid**.
- **The support of elected Members and senior officers is vital**. Champions are needed who see the value of youth volunteering and engagement and who will work to resolve the intractable problems at a high level.
- **Ownership needs to be corporate** and should not reside in one service or department alone. Barriers can often be resolved by working in partnership across services. The Youth Service and local authority 'participation officers' have real skills to contribute to this agenda but they cannot deliver and sustain all the consultation and engagement of young people that is needed across all the service areas. Other service areas and departments also need to own youth engagement and develop the appropriate skills.
- It is important that local councils take on board that **young people may find different routes to engagement** and that **varied methods are**

**needed** for young people to find the method of expression that suits their needs and abilities. An attempt to channel all volunteering and engagement through one 'approved' structure (such as a youth parliament or young mayors) is likely to prevent other young people finding an appropriate niche and style for their contribution. It is the variety of routes to engagement that needs to be corporately owned and acknowledged rather than a single quasi-democratic structure.

## **Positive Youth Engagement: Review and Evaluation of the Beacon Council Peer Support Programme 2007-9.**

### **Section 1: The aims and approach of this evaluation**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This evaluation assesses the impact of the two-year Beacon Positive Youth Engagement Peer Support Programme and the learning to be drawn from it. The programme was designed to fulfil the Russell Commission recommendation to maximise the potential of young volunteers in public services (Russell, 2005).

The Beacon Scheme is a good practice and knowledge transfer programme run by the Department of Communities and Local Government and IDeA. It is designed to recognise practice excellence in local government and to facilitate the sharing of this experience within local authorities in England. Round seven of the Beacon Scheme included the theme of positive youth engagement and eight councils were awarded Beacon status for this theme in 2006. The Beacon Peer Support Fund built on the main Beacon award. Past Beacons were offered the chance to bid for a share of £2 million to provide more targeted and innovative support. In 2007, Derwentside (as the lead applicant) was awarded £237,000 to continue the work on Youth Engagement with other Beacon authorities. The programme planned to further the work within the original Beacon Councils and to support other local authorities to spread good practice more widely. The programme was also supported by funding from the Office for the Third Sector at the Cabinet Office.

In particular, the programme was designed to address the delivery of the Russell Commission recommendations relating to the public sector. Recommendation 9 addresses the need to unlock the potential for young volunteers to give additional help in the delivery of public services such as hospitals, schools, parks and sports, leisure and arts centres. It draws attention not only to the need to encourage greater levels of volunteering within public services but also to maximise the particular opportunities to involve young people in shaping local services and as active citizens in local democracy. It saw young people not just as potential 'doers' but also as potential 'shapers' of services.

The Peer Support Programme was also seen as contributing to the delivery of other Russell recommendations such as those for developing a volunteering ethos in all educational institutions (4); increasing the numbers and diversity of young people volunteering (7); developing ways to recognise and accredit the skills young people learn in the course of their activity (11); ensuring that young people on benefits do not suffer financial loss as a result of volunteering (12); and increasing the capacity of organisations to engage groups which have historically found it difficult to access volunteering, especially disabled volunteers (13). The most relevant recommendations from the Russell Report are set out at Appendix E.

The work was also intended to help meet the target of Public Service Agreement 4, 2004 (PSA4), which was to "increase voluntary and community engagement, especially amongst those at risk of social exclusion". The

programme therefore concentrated on authorities in the priority regions for PSA4 and chiefly on its three risk groups “people with no qualifications, minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities”. This was aimed at increasing voluntary activity by individuals at risk of social exclusion and increasing the capacity and contribution of the voluntary and community sector to deliver more public services. There was also an emphasis on young people not in training, education or employment (NEET) and looked after young people (LAC), who would of course in many cases overlap with the specific PSA4 target groups.

## **1.2 The Beacon PYE Peer Support partnerships**

The eight original youth engagement Beacon Councils and the 15 partner authorities they worked with and supported during the programme are listed below.

- Derwentside District Council with Sedgefield Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
- Gateshead Council with South Tyneside Council and Durham County Council.
- Lancashire County Council with Burnley Borough Council and Pendle Borough Council.
- London Borough of Lewisham with Medway Council and London Borough of Southwark.
- Norfolk County Council with Bassetlaw District Council.
- Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council with North East Lincolnshire Council and North Yorkshire County Council.
- West Sussex County Council with Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council.
- Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council with Liverpool City Council and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

## **1.3 The focus for the evaluation**

The Youth Affairs Unit at De Montfort University was commissioned in July 2007 to undertake the role of research partner to review and evaluate the two-year Peer Support Programme and to report on the learning from the support projects to inform policy development and future practice. The main aims of the evaluation have been to develop and deliver a research methodology which reflected the diversity of the projects undertaken across the eight Beacon Councils concerned and the local authorities they supported; to provide an independent assessment of the outcomes; and to draw out the learning from this experience for the Cabinet Office and the Department of Communities and Local Government and for local practice.

This evaluation therefore focuses on marshalling the evidence to answer the following key questions about the programme:

- To what extent did the programme succeed in creating opportunities for young people to volunteer in local authority and public service contexts to help deliver services and to assist in shaping or improving them?
- What roles and settings were attractive to the young people and why?
- Did the programme succeed in reaching the PSA4 target groups and other socially excluded young people?
- Is there evidence that young people gained from their participation and if so, in what ways did they benefit?
- What barriers were identified in relation to young people's involvement in volunteering and engagement, especially for the socially excluded groups? Do particular barriers exist for specific groups?
- What solutions were found to overcome those barriers?
- What worked well in enhancing youth engagement and in what circumstances?
- Is there any evidence of the impact of the young volunteers on the quality of public services? Are there concrete examples of change brought about through their participation in the local schemes?
- What implications, if any, are there for the strategies, resources and infrastructure of local government necessary to achieve effective youth involvement in public services?
- What key learning emerges from these findings that can inform practice and policy development?

The brief for the evaluation reflected the priority being given by both national and local government to encouraging volunteering and to engaging citizens, including young people, in the tasks of governance and service improvement. Numerous changes in policies and structures for work with young people provide the backdrop to this study, including:

- The publication of Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003), Youth Matters (DfES, 2005) and the Ten-year Youth Strategy (HM Treasury/DCSF, 2007);
- The Russell Commission report ;
- The moves to listen to young people's views including the framework guidance of Hear by Right (Wade et al, 2001);
- The development of Children's Trusts;
- Policy development on community cohesion and citizenship.

Together, these policy drivers combine to create a range of new opportunities for work with young people, particularly for public and voluntary sector organisations, whilst at the same time leading to considerable turbulence in the youth affairs field. Youth related services are facing substantial reorganisation and restructuring as Children's Trusts seek to join up their interventions and to commission new or different youth support services. District councils are also concerned to reach young people and improve the quality of life especially around issues of nuisance and anti-social behaviour; play and recreation; employment and regeneration; and protecting the environment. At all levels there is concern about the alienation of young people from democratic processes, the deepening generational divide and the tensions between different local communities.

The evidence suggests that the current economic climate may make the labour market less open to young entrants. Young people are continuing to experience a range of difficulties which militate against their social inclusion: poverty, racism, poor housing, homelessness, rural isolation, lack of confidence and self-esteem. Social mobility in Britain trails behind most developed countries, with cycles of deprivation still preventing some young people achieving their potential (Brewer et al, 2009). There are still attainment gaps in education between boys and girls and between the majority and the most disadvantaged. Many employers are arguing that young people lack the social skills to function well in the world of work.

The research team took as its starting point the belief that youth engagement and volunteering that involves young people in public services has a real capacity to contribute to the solutions of these problems. In 2007, the Policy Review of Children and Young People argued that “public services work best where users and the community are engaged and empowered to participate actively in the design and delivery of the services provided.” (DfES and HM Treasury, 2007.) When young people are involved in this way, the social capital networks between people are strengthened and new skills can be fostered for future leadership and employment. Bridges can be built between apparently disparate groups. Young people can derive new confidence from their ability to contribute to real change and the commitment and values of the adults they meet can influence their sense of citizenship and service to the community. In this study the researchers set out to collect evidence that would help to make a judgement about whether or not such propositions would be borne out by the Beacon scheme. This report does bear out those beliefs and offers detailed evidence on the outcomes of the Beacon peer support programme and the ways in which barriers to engagement can be overcome.

## **Section 2: The design and methodology of the study**

The original proposals for the research design were refined in consultation with Cabinet Office representatives, the Programme Manager and the key managers in the Beacon Councils. The research design used both qualitative and quantitative methods to map the various kinds of youth engagement occurring in the relevant local authorities and to offer an overall analysis of the range and level of youth involvement taking place. The research team has also been at pains to ensure that the voices of potentially marginalised groups of young people should be heard by seeking their views at first hand. The approach gave rise to several different elements of the study and their associated research instruments.

### **2.1 Examining the policy context**

The brief for the evaluation included the need to examine and summarise the policy context of the work. This included the findings of the Russell Commission and national progress in increasing youth volunteering; initiatives on community cohesion and the involvement of young people; and the policy context and priorities for youth engagement in the respective local authorities. Some background was also gathered from OFSTED, Joint Area Reviews or Audit Commission reports on the relevant authorities. This summary of the policy background is provided at Section 3. This phase also involved telephone interviews with the national level stakeholders for youth volunteering. These respondents are included in the list at Appendix C.

### **2.2 Establishing baseline positions and implementation issues**

The brief for the research included the question of establishing the progress made against a baseline at the start of the programme. This section of the work has been one of the most challenging. Early discussions showed that the schemes in the different Beacon partnerships were so varied that it would be impossible to operate from a single set of baseline and final indicators. Some schemes were for instance undertaking volunteering in public authority departments, some were peer inspecting services for young people in the area, while others were seeking to involve particular groups of excluded young people and improve services for them. Each scheme had its own aims and methods. It was therefore decided that each Beacon area would establish its own baseline indicators relating to the nature of the work and would collect the necessary monitoring data to show the final achievements against those indicators. Indicators were agreed with almost all the authorities by March 2008 and progress in monitoring was followed up by the research team and by the Programme Manager for the quarterly progress reports. A summary of this evidence appears at Appendix A.

The study also sought to establish whether or not progress had been made against standards on youth involvement such as the Hear by Right criteria. This proved problematic as the authorities used several different assessment frameworks or none at all and some were unsure of their current level and progress. The limited evidence on this point appears in Section 7.2 below.



Members of the research team made two visits to each Beacon area, one in each year of the programme with the second visit being somewhat longer than the first. The purpose of these visits was to see some of the work with young people and local authority staff at first hand and to gather information and views from a variety of relevant people. The question of baseline data and implementation issues were a major part of the early visits. The researchers interviewed a wide range of local authority staff, young volunteers and local stakeholders and saw several groups in action.

### **2.3 Exploring the perceptions of the young people involved**

The views of young people themselves about their experience were collected in three main ways:

- Questionnaires designed by the Youth Affairs Unit were administered through the individual local authorities. These were mainly structured in design but included a small number of unstructured questions for qualitative free text comment. The questionnaires explored the nature of the young people's involvement, the benefits they might have gained, the barriers they encountered and how they were overcome, and a range of demographic details. Responses could be returned in hard copy or by email. The questions were subject to consultation with the Beacon councils and subsequent amendment. A small pilot was conducted by West Sussex County Council with their Beacon group and as no significant amendments were necessary the results from this group were included in the overall totals. 118 responses were received and analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Since no comprehensive list (sampling frame) existed for all the young people involved across the Beacon work or even in each authority, it was impossible to achieve a random sample. It is therefore not possible to attribute statistical validity to the results. The return was also lower than hoped but responses were drawn from young people across every Beacon scheme and can therefore provide a good indication of trends.
- On the visits to the areas, the researchers conducted over 40 interviews with young people either individually or in twos or threes. These used a semi-structured interview schedule, enabling the interviewer to follow up questions of interest that emerged during the conversation. This explored the nature of their involvement, their own learning and development from it, barriers encountered and how they were overcome, and the extent to which they had been involved in decision-making or felt they had been able to influence change. The findings of these interviews have been subject to qualitative analysis searching for evidence in relation to the main themes and questions of the study. Where quotations are used in this report, they are drawn from the contemporaneous notes of the interview made by the researcher. A small number of interviews were tape recorded.
- In the second year of the study, the Beacon partners debated how best to capture the views of young people for the legacy product of the programme. The researchers were asked to add to their work with a series of focus groups for young people, one in each Beacon area, to

collect their perceptions as the scheme neared its close. The brief was to collect responses in relation to the benefits to the individual, the nature of the local authority support (especially in the process of early involvement and later onward referral to further volunteering), and what messages they would want to pass on to other young people or other local authorities who might engage in similar projects in the future. Seven Beacon areas were visited for this purpose, though the focus groups were not in all cases drawn from every local authority in the partnership. Ten focus groups were held in all which included young people from Knowsley, Liverpool, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Durham, West Sussex, Lewisham, Lancashire, Derwentside, Stockton and Sedgefield. In the case of the Norfolk, Bassetlaw partnership which concentrated on the building of skills and infrastructure with adults preparatory to the introduction of engagement work, no focus group took place as young people only became involved to a small extent at the very end of the scheme. These groups have involved over 70 young people with rather more young women than young men. More than half the groups have included young people with physical disabilities or learning difficulties. The groups have included minority ethnic young people (South Asian, African Caribbean and dual heritage) but in some areas the groups were entirely of white young people.

Quotations from these groups are used in italics in this report where young people's own words were captured. These were either written up on flip charts or post-its, recorded verbatim or taped during the groups. In addition, in several groups young people were asked to do an exercise of writing a text message to a friend about their project in their own words. Spelling and grammar have not been altered except where necessary on occasion to clarify meaning.

## **2.4 Exploring the views of adult stakeholders at local level**

Since the learning from the programme was always likely to be drawn in part from the perceptions and experience of the adults involved, the study also included ways of capturing the views of those involved in the local schemes. The responses show up trends and illuminate the problems encountered in a manner that helps to triangulate the views of young people.

- A semi-structured questionnaire was designed by the research team for adults and administered by the local authorities to their own selection of adults with an involvement in the scheme. 76 responses were received from a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. Once again statistical validity cannot be attributed to the results as a sampling frame was not feasible, the return was relatively small and authorities themselves chose the adults from whom to invite a response.
- The researchers conducted individual interviews (by telephone or face to face) and in some instances met with small groups or observed partnership meetings. These stakeholders included Elected Members, managers and workers on the local programmes and representatives of services that had used volunteers or experienced the engagement of the young people. The semi-structured interview schedules allowed

researchers to follow up on particular local issues but generally explored the implementation problems, the barriers encountered and means of surmounting them, the ways in which under-represented and vulnerable groups were reached and supported, ways in which local services had responded and the implications for the local authority for support structures or future development. More than 70 adults were interviewed in the course of the study and respondents are listed at Appendix C.

- A proforma was provided for staff to record Incidents of Positive Impact that occurred. This asked for details of what had happened, who had benefited, what the main driver was for the achievement, and any changes or developments that had taken place in local services or in the lives of individual young people. Over 40 completed proformas were received. These qualitative responses have been analysed for trends and case examples.

## **2.5 Ethical issues**

Care was exercised throughout the study to ensure that ethical principles were followed. Individuals were assured that their comments would be treated as confidential and only reported anonymously or as part of general trends. Participants in the study have been provided with anonymity in this report by appropriate means such as changing names of individuals or locations in order to reduce the likelihood of identification. Local authorities or individual projects are only named where they provide an instance of good practice.

In order that young people who participated in the study could fully understand the nature of the study, they were provided with information sheets outlining the purpose of the evaluation and how their comments would be used. They were assured that their comments even if critical would not affect the support they received from their authorities. The information sheets also offered appropriate contacts for organisations which could provide help and support with any issues which might have arisen for them in the course of an interview or group. Informed consent was obtained from participants and (where appropriate) their parents/carers were informed about the research by the relevant local authority.

## **Section 3: The context of policy and research – a summary of the literature review**

### **3.1 The literature review**

As part of the research, a substantial literature review was undertaken to ensure that the significant strands of previous research were taken into account. This review encompassed all three aspects of engagement highlighted in the Russell report – young people providing additional capacity in public services; young people bringing their views and experience to help shape and improve local services; and young people beginning to act as engaged citizens and take part in local democracy. Not only are they a key part of the Russell findings but the Beacon schemes reflected this diversity in the roles that young people played. The completed literature review was placed on the Beacon web forum in June 2008 so that the authorities could refer to it for information. It has been summarised here but the original full version will be available on the new legacy website for this programme.

### **3.2 National strategic partners**

As part of the review, representatives of all the Cabinet Office youth volunteering strategic partners were interviewed. These organisations receive core funding from the Office of the Third Sector to enable them to assist in developing young people's engagement and volunteering and were likely to have a substantial understanding of the issues that the Beacon authorities faced and the necessary conditions for effective youth engagement. The organisations are the British Youth Council, the Citizenship Foundation, the National Youth Agency, v, Youth Action Network and Youthnet UK. Where quotations are included in this section, they are drawn from these interviews. In order to preserve a degree of anonymity, the organisation has not been named although in some cases the context of the comments unavoidably gives some indications.

### **3.3 Volunteering and participation definitions**

The most generally accepted definition of volunteering (Commission on the Future of Volunteering, 2008) is as follows:

*“Volunteering is an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives.”* (Volunteering Compact and Code of Good Practice.)

The report of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering (2008) drawing on the work of Justin Davis Smith (2000) identifies at least four types of engagement in volunteering, all of which were evident in one or other of the Beacon projects:

- Mutual aid or self-help

- Philanthropy or service to others (which may be formal volunteering in clubs or organisations or informal volunteering simply helping others in the community)
- Participation (which includes involvement in political or decision-making processes on a voluntary basis at any level such as being a board member, on a users' forum, or a youth representative)
- Advocacy and campaigning

These types can at times be overlapping. Rochester (2006) also notes that volunteering can include the activities where volunteers themselves decide how they can best give their time, rather than those decisions being made by the organisations in which they volunteer.

Davis and Edwards (2004) drawing on results from a number of seminars and events on participation and social inclusion identify five key aspects which need to be in place to ensure that youth participation is a transformative experience and not tokenistic. These are:

- Participation involves being heard and something changing for the better as a result;
- Participation is best promoted through opportunities for engagement in dialogue, not oppositional or confrontational processes between children, young people and decision-makers;
- Participation needs to be rooted in the lived lives of children and young people on tangible issues of concern and importance to them;
- Participation is political and is about the enfranchisement of a disenfranchised group in society to ensure effective action to make change happen;
- Participation needs to be inclusive through opportunities for the young to take part on their own terms and on their own issues and not just through adult initiated or established models and processes.

The relationship between volunteering and participation has been of concern to people working in the field with a perception that although the two have common roots they should not be regarded as identical.

*“We have promoted the Volunteering Compact since 2005 which does have enough definitions of volunteering to cover a lot of activities and enabling governance is coded as an example. You have to be clear however that not all volunteering is participation – for it to be that young people would have to be able to find a voice and feel they are taking part in something that is going somewhere and clearly some volunteering doesn’t get there.”*  
(Stakeholder, national partner organisation.)

### **3.4 Volunteering**

The political context for the promotion of both volunteering and participation by young people in decision-making has international roots in United Nations initiatives which have been endorsed and promoted in Britain.

In 1997, the General Assembly of the United Nations 'proclaimed 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) in recognition of the valuable contribution of voluntary action in addressing global issues.' (UN General Assembly, 2005.)

There is a long history of government support from both Labour and Conservative Parties for volunteering, from the establishment of the Volunteer Centre (now Volunteering England) in 1976 through to current programmes for young people such as Millennium Volunteers. New Labour in 1997 included volunteering as a major theme within their compact with the voluntary and community sector.

Within Britain the administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are developing their own volunteering and participation initiatives, but in England the government set up the Russell Commission in May 2004 to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement. This initiative was a response to a number of linked concerns about the position of young people on the part of government, including a perceived rise in anti-social behaviour, a decline in election voting and understanding of citizenship, and anxiety concerning general community cohesion. Following extensive consultation, the Commission put forward 16 recommendations, designed to engage more young people in volunteering and community action. The major recommendation was to create a new dedicated implementation body to commission the delivery of the national framework.

The key Russell Commission recommendations included:

- a series of campaigns to raise awareness of volunteering linked to a national web-based volunteering portal which will ensure access to information on volunteering opportunities and the creation of 200 youth volunteer advisers and 200 Youth Volunteer Development Manager posts to ensure that young people receive high quality advice and guidance on volunteering;
- action in schools, colleges and higher education institutions to make it commonplace for young people to volunteer while in education;
- giving young people access to a 'menu of opportunity' with details of the full range of volunteering activities including full-time and international opportunities, and tapping into the potential for volunteering by young people within the public sector;
- Quality assurance: the encouragement of volunteer-involving organisations 'to meet minimum standards governing the access, involvement, development and reward of young volunteers';
- Measuring the impact of these measures and ensuring attention is paid to evaluation and learning.

(Rochester, 2006.)

The recommendations were accepted by government and £100 million of public funding was allocated over three years to support their implementation. The newly created youth volunteering organisation v has a target of raising £50 million from the private sector, to be matched on a pound for pound basis by HM Treasury. v is working in partnership with other volunteer-involving

organisations, young people, business and government, to make volunteering a valued part of young people's lives. v has completed its first funding round to create new, youth-led full-time, part-time and short term volunteering opportunities, and 20 teams of Youth Volunteer Development Managers and Youth Volunteer Advisers.

In 2007, Gordon Brown appointed Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Julia Neuberger to his government "of all the talents" as his volunteering champion. She chaired the Commission on the Future of Volunteering which reported in January 2008, in a publication entitled "Manifesto for Change" which made a number of recommendations designed to modernise volunteering and raise its profile.

### **3.5 Young people's participation in decision-making and service delivery**

Children and young people's participation has risen up the government's agenda in recent years, prompted initially by adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991. The Convention underwrites the human rights of children as individuals and gives them rights to participate in decisions that affect them, most notably through Article 12, which states the right of the child to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter or procedure affecting the child. Article 23 also refers to the rights of disabled children to be consulted on issues and services affecting them. The UN Committee which reviewed the UK Government's implementation of the UNCRC in 2002 felt that there was scope for improvement, particularly in ensuring that participation led to change.

The theme of greater youth engagement and responsibility has been incorporated into other government documents and initiatives promoting the welfare of children and young people. In the wake of the Victoria Climbié enquiry, a new joint planning and commissioning framework for children, young people's and maternity services (DfES, 2006), underpinned by the Children Act 2004, was developed based around the Every Child Matters principles (DfES, 2003). These five outcomes, originating from a children and youth consultation, comprise - being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and achieving economic well-being. The youth engagement agenda fits comfortably within the 'making a positive contribution' outcome but makes substantial input to the other targets as well.

Local authorities had a new duty to work in partnership in the development of Children's Trusts with a requirement to consult with parents and young people. The evaluation carried out on the pathfinder trusts found that this was taking time to be implemented.

*"The children, young people, parents and carers who took part in the panels generally had limited awareness and understanding of the work of children's trust pathfinders. However, in some pathfinders, children, young people, parents and carers were becoming involved in the planning, design and evaluation of services. More needs to be done to make this involvement meaningful to participants."* (University of East Anglia, 2006.)

### 3.6 Citizenship

The notion of youth participation as an expression of citizenship was contributed by the Crick Report in 1998, which reviewed the relationship between the individual and the state and revived the concept of active citizenship (Crick, 1998). This was predicated on the development of a critical capacity by the individual and the fostering of openness to other points of view, as a result of action and doing. The purpose of citizen education was declared to be that of increasing the knowledge, skills and values relevant to the nature and practice of participant democracy. As a way of instilling these values, attempting to reverse the decline in electoral voting among young adults and encouraging young people to get more actively involved, the New Labour government made citizenship education part of the National Curriculum.

Facing security concerns and a lack of public confidence in political appointments, the new Government also published the Green Paper “The Governance of Britain”, which includes proposals to strengthen the concept of British citizenship and enhancements of the youth citizenship curriculum in schools (HMSO, 2007). It noted that:

*“The engagement of young people in society and their understanding of what it is to be a citizen is central to creating a diverse but cohesive country...However, there has in recent times been a considerable decrease in the level of involvement among young people in formal political processes... This shows a lack of appreciation of the importance of the democratic process and of the need for active citizenship.”* (para. 189)

In response, in February 2008 the government launched the Youth Citizenship Commission, chaired by Professor Jonathan Tonge and focusing on young people aged 11 to 19 to:

- Examine what citizenship means to young people.
- Consider how to increase young people's participation in politics; the development of citizenship among disadvantaged groups; and how active citizenship can be promoted through volunteering and community engagement.
- Lead a consultation on whether the voting age should be lowered to 16.

The consultation on voting age is still ongoing at the time of writing (Youth Citizenship Commission, Oct. 2008).

In a parallel initiative, the independent Councillors' Commission was established in February 2007 to develop recommendations to encourage a more diverse range of people to become councillors so that communities are better represented. They support the proposal that the voting age should be reduced to 16 years. Their report ‘Representing the Future’ noted that:

*“Young people must be regarded as a fully-fledged section of the community and incorporated into the mainstream processes of the council – as the*



*Lewisham scheme does – rather than merely treated to occasional one-off ‘initiatives’.*” (The Councillors’ Commission, 2007.)

### **3.7 The ‘Aiming High’ Youth Strategy**

Many of these policy strands concerning volunteering, citizenship and participation in local governance were brought together in the Green Paper ‘Youth Matters’ (DfES, 2005) and government’s new strategy for young people ‘Aiming High for young people - a ten year strategy for positive activities’ (HM Treasury and DCSF, 2007). In this wide ranging review, youth empowerment had its own chapter where the whole range of activities designed to increase young people’s volunteering and participation was set out.

A key emphasis was placed on creating new programmes of positive activities designed to improve young people’s social and emotional skills and also protect against poor outcomes and negative experiences, developing their self-confidence and self esteem. It was also seen that these activities could help to build community cohesion. Volunteering and participation are seen as contexts in which young people’s experience of these positive activities may take place. Local services also have a responsibility for engaging marginalised young people. Increasing young people’s influence is viewed as an important first stage.

*“It is clear from the evidence considered by the Review and consultation with young people, that giving them genuine influence is a crucial first step to increasing participation in activities and access to wider public services. This is true for all young people, including those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, or those facing specific challenges, such as young people with disabilities.”* (para. 3.11)

*“Empowering young people to play a full role as active citizens is essential to improving their relationship with adults in their communities. Concerns about antisocial behaviour are lower where young people are engaging positively in their local communities, for example through volunteering.”* (para 3.30)

The work of authorities such as the Beacons in promoting young people’s involvement in political engagement was also praised and highlighted:

*“Local Authorities are also making use of a wide range of methods to increase young people’s representation. Some are creating a role for Young Mayors, where a young person is elected by their peers to represent their interests in local democratic structures and may have a budget of their own, as well as direct access to adult elected members. Others are establishing Youth Councils and Forums, which enable young people to get involved in decision-making and promote the voice of young people at council level and in wider services.”* (para. 3.18)

*“The Government will expand significantly young people’s direct influence and control on the design, commissioning, and delivery of local services. This applies to all young people, but particularly those who are least likely to feel*

*empowered to demand more of services. To increase participation by putting more resources and responsibility in young people's hands the Government will:*

- extend the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds until at least 2011, with additional resources for projects in the most disadvantaged communities;*
- encourage Local Authorities to build on the success of the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds by giving young people greater influence over resources – 25 per cent of spending on youth activities and facilities by 2018;*
- invest in supporting young people to set up sustainable projects delivering positive activities to other disadvantaged young people; and*
- invest in a National Institute of Youth Leadership to support young people's ability to bring about change more widely.” (para 3.4)*

In summary, the government is making a significant investment in youth engagement through its investment in youth volunteering and youth governance activities in the hope of significantly improving outcomes and opportunities for young people.

### **3.8 The nature and extent of youth volunteering**

Rochester (2006) published the most up-to-date review of volunteering across all age groups and noted that there are four kinds of explanation why some people volunteer and others do not: socio-economic factors, individual motivation, opportunity or access and the influence of history or culture. Ellis (2005) and others found that levels and types of volunteering varied between young people according to age, gender, ethnicity and background and that most young people had positive views of volunteering – as helping people out, being a good citizen and a way to gain skills and experience. These trends have also been confirmed by more recent research findings on volunteering.

Low et al (2007) interviewed a national sample of 2,156 adults and young people aged 16 upwards. They found that in the 16-24 age group 57% of the age group were formal volunteers and of these 43% were regular and 13% occasional volunteers. 43% were not volunteers, a similar proportion to 24-34 year olds. Across all groups women were more likely to volunteer than men and of ethnic groups, people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin were the least likely to volunteer on a regular basis.

### **3.9 Motivation**

The Volunteer Functions Inventory originally developed by Clary and colleagues as reported in Rochester (2006) developed a set of statements which can explore the reasons for volunteering. Six types of reasons have been advanced:

- Values: people volunteer as a means of acting on important beliefs such as helping those less fortunate than themselves
- Understanding: volunteering as a means of personal learning and the development of skills

- Social: people choose the behaviour which is valued by their peer group
- Enhancement: volunteering is seen as a way of feeling better about oneself
- Protection: where people embrace volunteering as a way of dealing with negative feelings about themselves
- Career: people want to gain experiences which will enhance their employability

The findings from the Low et al (2007) and other surveys of young people confirm the importance of many of these aspects.

The new youth volunteering agency, v, conducted a survey of attitudes towards and perceptions of youth volunteering (v, 2008) with 1000 young people aged 16-25, employers, further and higher education institutions and volunteering organisations. This showed high support amongst all these groups for the contribution of volunteering to young people's skill development and career progression.

The way in which this might be achieved was explored in more detail by the DfES /NYA (2007) survey based on 205 young people aged 11 -24. This study picked up on young people's interest in skill development, noting that:

*"Young people identify for themselves a wide range of personal and social skills to develop through volunteering, but opportunities to reflect on and articulate this learning are often underdeveloped... evidence [shows] that young people can and do increase their self-confidence and self esteem, develop a range of communication skills and improve their ability to work with other people through volunteering."*

Volunteering can act as a catalyst for young people to engage more effectively with other learning, or in some cases re-engage with formal learning or training, putting them in a position where they can develop skills and potentially gain qualifications. Many young people also develop practical skills related to their specific experiences of volunteering. The potential contribution of volunteering to young people's learning and skills development includes the following aspects:

- Volunteering engages young people at the level they are currently at;
- Volunteering brings young people into contact with a wider range of people than their experiences at school or work, requiring them to develop skills of teamwork, leadership, negotiation and conflict resolution, enabling them to take on roles that would surprise people who knew them in other settings;
- Preparation for employment – volunteering created opportunities to test out different career options, gain practical experiences and acquire skills related to specific types of employment. In some cases experiences of volunteering had directly helped them to get interviews and jobs;

- There is a strong relationship between young people's sense of how their activities benefit their communities and their increased self-esteem and self-worth when their contribution is recognised;
- Young people reported improvements in self-confidence and communication, followed by team work and managing relationships, and additional benefits of taking responsibility, preparation for work, problem-solving and planning.

Elements such as making friends and enjoying themselves may feature more highly for some young people than explicit commitment to skills development – and this needed to be recognised. Young people highlighted the importance of recognition of their achievements through certificates and evidence for CVs. This was especially important for people with little other evidence of achievement – some, although not all, wanted formal accreditation.

The recent report from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES, 2009) suggests that learning providers do not consistently develop the ability to use skills and knowledge effectively in the workplace. It underlines the need that employers have for 'employability skills' and argues that these are the skills of self-management, thinking and solving problems, working together and communicating, and of understanding the business. All these areas are underpinned by using numbers, language and IT effectively.

*"This is enabled by everyone coming out of the public employment and skills system being able to work in a team, communicate clearly, listen well, be interested and keen to learn, take criticism, solve problems, read, write and add. These employability skills are the lubricant of our increasingly complex and interconnected workplace. They are not a substitute for specific knowledge and technical skills: but they make the difference between being good at a subject and being good at doing a job. In 2009, too few people have these skills. Business has been asking for them for twenty years."*  
(Sir Mike Rake, Introduction to UKCES, 2009.)

The evidence is accumulating that these sorts of skills can be developed through volunteering and engagement. This evaluation itself explores further how the experience of volunteering and engagement fostered those skills in the Beacon participants (see Section 5 below).

### **3.10 Reaching disadvantaged young people and the barriers to volunteering**

There have been consistent findings regarding barriers to youth volunteering, particularly around young people finding out what opportunities exist and in a context where engagement depends so much on personal contact with peers and trusted adults, young people with limited social networks who are more likely to be disadvantaged can find it difficult to break out of their conventional habits and find ways to do something new.

Ellis (2005) notes that perceptions that volunteering is 'boring' and not 'cool' were held by a minority of non volunteers, including marginalised and hard to

reach young people, who had very limited knowledge of what volunteering might involve. There was a perception that volunteering needed rebranding to reflect young people's lifestyles and its relevance to them and to emphasise the opportunities it can offer.

Low et al (2007) recorded barriers to volunteering experienced by their young non volunteers including lack of information about types of volunteering and what they might gain from it, lack of time, lack of confidence, costs regarding travel and childcare, negative peer pressure because of the low status of volunteering, lack of confidence and fear of rejection.

There appear to be more practical guides suggesting how agencies might improve their recruitment among these groups than actual hard evidence of their experience of volunteering. Rochester (2006) noted that three groups faced particular barriers to wider participation in formal volunteering – individuals from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups; disabled people and ex-offenders. The image of volunteering and the social background of people who took part were seen as a major obstacle and these respondents felt that volunteering was not valued in current society although they had little first hand knowledge of the type of examples and they tended to overestimate the time commitment needed and their lack of confidence. There was also anxiety about the attitudes of other people to them and fear of losing benefits. Over-formal recruitment procedures and administrative delays were also found to be off-putting.

Low et al (2007) highlighted experiences of black and minority ethnic groups but did not distinguish these by age group which would be likely to have a significant effect. Changemakers (2007) interviewed 16 young volunteers from black and minority ethnic groups and faith groups. Many of these young people came to volunteering through contact with youth work, or school, colleges and youth action projects and some decided to stand for the UK Youth Parliament which offered them further opportunities.

A strong message from all the BME young volunteers was that organisations needed to recruit young volunteers from these communities to act as role models; develop a better cultural awareness of the communities they work with; increase the representation of workers from BME and faith groups in the organisation; and work with the wider community and parents to promote the benefits of volunteering.

One of the objectives of government policy is to widen the basis of youth participation beyond that of the 'usual suspects'. However this still remains difficult to achieve. Attending meetings regularly, taking on responsibilities, standing for election and engaging with local councillors which might be the requirements for certain types of political engagement will not usually be initially attractive to children and young people who lack self-confidence, have mobility or transport difficulties and live unpredictable lives. Considerable support from participation workers is required to overcome these barriers as this report will bear out.

Oldfield and Fowler (2004) provide the most extensive evidence of local authorities' capacity to reach seldom heard groups but had to rely on the perceptions of local authority staff. Their respondents reported some success in involving 'hard to reach' groups of children and young people. Around half of statutory and voluntary organisations (51% and 47% respectively) involve children and young people not in education, employment or training in decision-making. Half of statutory sector respondents (52%) reported involving children and young people in or formerly in care, and over four in ten (45%) involved young offenders. 34% and 21% respectively of statutory and voluntary organisations reported involving young refugees and asylum seekers in decision-making.

Despite this, around two thirds of statutory sector (68%) and just over half of voluntary sector organisations (51%) said they found it difficult to reach specific groups of children and young people, including black and minority ethnic young people, NEET and 'disaffected' young people and those living in isolated rural areas. Around half of the organisations had identified ways to address this, which included building partnerships with Youth Services, Connexions, race equality councils and local community groups, outreach work, and targeted projects.

Another area of youth governance which is expected to reach out in a significant way to seldom heard young people are the youth panels set up to distribute Youth Opportunity Funds (YOF) and Youth Capital Funds, where it is proposed that representatives from these groups should be part of decision-making panels and be well represented in projects making applications for funds. Davies (2007) noted that local authorities were aiming to reach key target groups but in year 1, however, it was clear that low aspirations and lack of confidence were still deterring key target groups from applying for funding. O'Donnell et al (2007) are carrying out the national evaluation. They reported that there were examples across the case-study areas of successful applications from young people in disadvantaged areas and from target groups and that local authority staff considered that the number of applications was increasing and diversifying. However, at the time of their visits, many of the applications were said to be from established youth groups that were most commonly related to the Youth Service. Although these groups did include the target groups, staff were finding it a challenge to increase the diversity of applications further from voluntary and community sector organisations and 'harder-to-reach' young people. Approaches to achieving this included outreach work, targeted promotion, area panels or protected sub-funds for specific target groups. Skinner and Fleming (2007b) who evaluated Actions Speak Louder, a national competition for funded YOF projects, found a number of instances of seldom heard young people being successfully involved in selection panels.

### **3.11 Participation in local governance and service delivery**

*"People will say we should listen to young people because they are our future but really we should be listening to everyone, and therefore listening to young people, not just because they are our future but because they have the right*

*to a voice like everyone else. Young people can have interesting ideas and they can think outside the box because they have not been conditioned in the ways adults have. They think differently and can be passionate about issues and can have more time. They need to feel valued members of society – not special cases – they can be a marginalised group.”* (Stakeholder, national partner organisation.)

Relatively few young people appear to direct their volunteering to opportunities in local governance. The Home Office Citizenship Survey 2005 found only 1% of their sample of 16-19 year olds were involved in civic participation.

There are comparatively few studies which gathered evidence directly from young people and it is notable that there are even less which deal with the experience of seldom heard young people from e.g. minority ethnic, looked after, disabled, gay and lesbian and traveller backgrounds. Samples of young people interviewed are reported to be balanced according to social background, but tend to be small in number. The more general reports on youth participation do not draw out very particular lessons concerning the ways in which young people from seldom heard backgrounds can be involved in local authority governance, apart from disabled and looked after children whose participation in Children's and Young People's Services tends to be studied rather than their more broad based participation. Within the literature however it is the case that there is more positive evidence of youth participation in the last two years than in the last seven and studies carried out in the early 2000s show more evidence of tokenism and failure to engage young people effectively on the part of local authorities than more recent research.

Halsey et al (2006) investigated a wide range of different studies of youth participation for any measurable impact that had occurred as a result of young people's involvement in policy and practice at the local level. Their work reflects the gains of recent years. They summarised the main arenas where they had been able to substantiate some discernible outcomes in youth participation as follows:

- Changes in organisational practice or facilities including changes to the design and delivery of services to make them more youth friendly.
- Strategy and policy development  
Young people being consulted and influencing the content of local authority policies affecting them.
- Impact on budgetary decision-making  
Young people in some cases were being given responsibility for disbursing certain types of local authority funds as well as making decisions about YOF/YCF and Youthbank funding.
- Impact on recruitment practices  
Young people are increasingly being involved in selection procedures for professional staff but most often still in Youth and Connexions services.

- The production of materials and information resources, especially where young people are involved in the production of youth friendly versions of official policy documents.

Oldfield and Fowler (2004) conducted the most wide ranging survey of statutory and voluntary organisations in England to establish a systematic picture of the levels and ways in which children and young people were involved in public decision-making. They found that children and young people were most likely to be involved in decision-making at the level of generating ideas about existing and new policies or services and were less likely to be involved in service delivery and monitoring and evaluation. Young people were most likely to be involved in decision-making about issues which have a clear or immediate impact on their lives e.g. leisure services, youth services, community, education and health. They were less involved in broader issues of transport, housing or the environment.

Some of the trends highlighted by Oldham and Fowler (2004) were still apparent in the findings of Skinner and Fleming (2007a), who reviewed practice in 8 authorities which received Beacon status for the quality of their youth participation work, but they also found that some structures had been very effective in enabling young people to bring about significant change. These included changing organisational policy and practice on the part of the police, education, leisure and health services and improving the provision of youth services. Some success however was also reported on transport issues such as negotiating concessionary bus fares and challenging stereotypical depictions of young people by a rail company. Young people who were members of either elected or non elected authority-wide shadow assemblies or youth councils were able to sustain long-term relationships with councillors which helped to bring about change. Otherwise involvement in recruitment was the main contribution reported and staff commitment to involving young people in this way was largely still concentrated in Youth and Connexions Services with only a few examples from social services departments.

Gunn (2005) carried out a study of the nature of young people's participation in social services policy making in three different authorities and set out the characteristics of the particular corporate style of decision-making that distinguished each one. This included some interviews with looked after young people. He found that the processes reflected the current policy rhetoric of advocates of participation with a mixture of the rights of young people as consumers and citizens cited at justifications. The participation rhetoric was reported to be influential with managers and elected members and young people were being provided with a 'space' for participation, but in only one authority were there discernible shifts towards making organisations more accountable to the young people who relied on their services and this was due to the particular vision and commitment of a specific manager who ensured the implementation of this approach.

It is often an unrepresentative section of the age group who find their way to stand for elected offices or get involved in local governance on a regular



basis. Both Molloy et al (2002) and Sloan (2007) confirm that it is more normal for young people aged 16-25 to be uninterested or disillusioned about local and national political processes and while they may be interested in national issues or concerned about what goes on in their own local area, they lacked knowledge and understanding of local government powers and responsibilities and how they might influence these to achieve effective change.

Young people who became actively involved in political governance had by and large been mobilised by word of mouth recommendations, often from parents, friends or a trusted adult such as a youth worker. Molloy (2002) noted the need for confidence in expressing their views and an ability to detach themselves from the views of their peer group. The process of getting involved, finding out how the system worked and taking action to achieve an agreed goal reinforced these young people's beliefs in the political process and their position on influential youth bodies helped to increase their profile and could thus lead on to further opportunities.

Sloan (2007) identified a new breed of super activist who belonged to many different groups and representative bodies and Skinner and Fleming (2007a) also noted a tendency for engaged young people to take on many different roles, sometimes encouraged by youth workers who having found a committed and efficient young person particularly from a seldom heard group would offer them more opportunities. They recommended that young people should not be too heavily involved in multiple roles to allow others to take their place locally when they moved on to authority wide responsibilities.

*"I suspect all of us in the industry have been far more successful at getting young people who already participate to participate more rather than getting those who haven't done it before. We run the risk of widening the participation gap not narrowing it. We continue the upskilling of those already skilled. [At national meetings] young people stand up and they tell of the dozen different bodies that they are active on. A real issue. We should evaluate the extent to (1) which new participants are brought in and (2) existing participants are involved in different forms of participation."* (Stakeholder, national partner organisation.)

### **3.12 Structures involved in youth governance**

There is a wide range of different structures designed for youth governance but there is as yet little recent evidence concerning the effectiveness of each type. Skinner and Fleming (2007a) in their evaluation of Beacon authorities were able to present some findings related to structures and processes as a result of interviews with both staff and young people which revealed both continuation of some trends described and some improvement.

- The lack of proper collective responsibility for youth participation on the part of some local councils was still evident with, in some cases, an over reliance on enthusiastic Chief Executives and Young People's Champions which could mask a degree of disengagement and lack of commitment on the part of other elected members.

- Very divergent views on the effectiveness of the UK Youth Parliament as a channel for youth engagement in local and national politics were reported.
- Structures that were successful in achieving discernible levels of political change benefiting young people had to adopt similar processes to local authority cabinets and ensure regular contact between young people and councillors, although voting systems were not a key prerequisite.
- Local area based youth councils still appeared to be a potential weak link in the repertoire of youth participation models with difficulties in some cases of ensuring engagement by local political decision makers.
- The local authorities' requirement to consult with young people on a range of particular issues met with a mixed response on their part as these did not always tally with the themes they themselves wanted to explore and promote and there was still a tendency for minimal feedback on the outcomes of this activity.
- For some young people there was a mismatch between the timescale needed to achieve useful outcomes in political activity and the time and effort they had available to commit.
- Young people reported high levels of personal benefit from forms of political engagement, but this could only be produced through training and support from youth workers, regular (at least monthly) face to face meetings with a peer group engaged in achieving an agreed set of goals and the carrying out of purposeful activities and responsibilities.
- Groups which met less often with more diffuse aims did not achieve the same degree of personal gain. The authors recommended creating many different types of groups and forums in local authorities around different shared interests and at a very local level to enable a wider range of the age group to benefit.

Most national level respondents in this study were optimistic about the benefits of this form of youth involvement and use of a range of different methods was recommended. Young people were perceived as able to impact upon a variety of services, not just those for young people.

*"I think they do achieve something – being involved in a forum is usually good for young people unless it is very tokenistic, as long as they are well supported. Even if their voice is not loud, they can have an impact which will be good for their skills and confidence. Two ways 1) they can gain in skills and confidence especially if they have a tough time and have to fight for their achievements and 2) they and others will benefit from the changes they bring about."* (Stakeholder, national partner organisation.)

*"...some structures are really important – we know they are good as there is considerable buy in from young people who've learnt things and been effectively engaged and been able to influence change. In terms of structures there can be a forced nature to these however when they are based on political or business models. Some can be useful to young people in terms of citizenship issues, but they can deter young people who don't relate to these methods. They might find a video box or texting a more immediate way of responding and being heard."* (Stakeholder, national partner organisation.)

*“If we are going to have a healthy adult democracy, we need to facilitate and encourage the skills to participate in that democracy, from primary school upward – that’s why we’re committed to citizens’ education, social action programmes. When we talk about it – we ought not to make the mistake of assuming that young people participate only on young people’s issues. Whilst it’s fine that young people should identify and fight for example for a skate park, if we only facilitate at that level, we’ll really miss the bigger contribution that they can make. They don’t just live in planet youth, they live in society, and often they’re willing and able to ask questions of the wider society and adult world.” (Stakeholder, national partner organisation.)*

The evidence above confirms that the structures which are necessary to achieve success make far-reaching demands on young people which may restrict the kinds of young people who become involved. As a number of the voluntary sector interviewees indicated, however, the main blockages more usually came from adults, who did not recognise the legitimacy of young people’s desire to share power.

*“I’ve been going to regional events about the new policy (participation) with people who 10 years back would have laughed at the very thought of what is now becoming mainstream policy... But there still are some powerful players who are going in for some philosophical blocking. Most of the barriers are adults who have vested interests and inertia and people who don’t see why they should give power to young people. For them giving any power away involves a real seismic shift. They think what’s in it for them to have to defer to the views of a 17 year old – those who can accommodate it have the sophistication and self-confidence to do so and get their sources of self esteem elsewhere than from being elected. There is also the issue of skills on the part of Chief Executives, middle administrators, front line workers, receptionists – some of that goes back to not having wide enough roots for the participation and some is about adult decision-making structures which are not yet in tune with young people’s needs.” (Stakeholder, national partner organisation.)*

*“Adults for their part can be very circumspect about involving young people properly. To do it properly the worker needs talent and skill. When you find it happening it is because there are magic people who can make it happen – sometimes without any resources at all although it is obviously more effective if the right kind of climate exists.” (Stakeholder, national partner organisation)*

Volunteering and youth governance are now high on the agenda of government. Voluntary agencies and local authorities are responding with a range of different structures and opportunities. Some interviewees could see the impact that this had on practice.

*“With the Round 7 strand of youth participation, it was the first time that agencies within our orbit were specifying ways in which volunteering and participation could be linked together. Previously people were talking about either volunteering or participation or giving young people a voice but not making the connection. Now people might have in their area a youth forum*

*that linked into the UKYP, a county wide forum or senior member committees, but the initiative is now enabling them to have a proper understanding of the potential sophistication of these activities. It has been really helpful to have this push from a government department.”* (Stakeholder, national partner organisation.)

Young people will respond to volunteering opportunities which are fun and relevant, and where their contribution can be recognised, but time scales will need to be flexible to take account of demands on their time and their personal inclinations. It is important to use existing young volunteers as ambassadors and mentors and trusted adults such as youth workers and participation workers to reach out to unrepresented target groups both to reassure them about the variety of opportunities on offer and the potential diversity of people taking part.

To achieve real policy changes at present in youth governance, young people often need to adapt to more formal structures and processes which shadow existing decision-making arrangements. These will not attract all young people. Comparatively small numbers of young people gain substantial amounts of benefit from formal youth governance and even if half the eligible age group in a local area take part in elections to youth assemblies or councils, the degree of feedback and further engagement they receive from their peers tends to be minimal. Innovation in structures and flexibility of methods of engagement are needed to maximise the potential of youth engagement in improving services. It will require repeated and continuous effort to reach and involve seldom heard young people and avoid over-dependence on the committed few.

## **Section 4: The scope and reach of the Peer Support Programme**

### **4.1 The varied approaches of the local partnerships**

The original Beacon Positive Youth Engagement scheme encouraged development of different approaches to the question of increasing volunteering and engagement in public services. Schemes developed different methods and had different local objectives. The Peer Support Programme was therefore also marked by varied aims and approaches as each Beacon lead sought to further the work and share it with partner authorities interested in similar objectives. While this made for considerable difficulties in finding appropriate evaluation methods, it did contribute a richness to the evidence about what worked well and the common difficulties faced in increasing engagement. The eight schemes are briefly summarised here drawing on the application for funding from February 2007 and the subsequent project plans for each area.

#### *Derwentside, with Sedgfield and Stockton-on-Tees*

This scheme developed and tested tailored approaches to engaging vulnerable young people and providing volunteering. It aimed to establish new structures for engagement in democratic and citizenship issues, to promote volunteering opportunities and to identify the chief barriers to engagement. It sought particularly to increase engagement amongst young people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic (BME) and newly arrived young people as its PSA4 groups.

#### *Gateshead, South Tyneside and Durham County*

Here the projects concentrated on skilling up young people to evaluate public services. It sought to demonstrate the value of involving young people in inspecting and evaluating services using 'mystery shopping' and peer inspection methods. It aimed in particular to involve young people who were without qualifications and NEET, minority ethnic young people and looked after young people. In practice, it also involved young people with disabilities.

#### *Lancashire, with Burnley and Pendle*

This partnership aimed to improve the range of volunteering opportunities available for young people in public services and to increase the numbers of young people involved in volunteering. It also set out to deploy young people as peer life coaches or mentors to help other young people enter volunteering. It targeted NEET and minority ethnic young people in particular.

#### *Lewisham, with Medway and Southwark*

This scheme aimed to build on existing good practice in the Young Mayors programme and the Young Commissioners initiative to identify appropriate young people to deliver such programmes and create appropriate training and structures to support them in decision-making. Once again it targeted minority ethnic young people and those who were NEET. This scheme was awarded additional funding at the end of the programme to develop a website by and for young people to create a local legacy product in a DVD made by the young people and a toolkit which will be linked to the new website.

#### *Norfolk, with Bassetlaw*

This scheme set out to use the Hear by Right framework to begin to establish the involvement of young people in new settings such as scrutiny of services. The project was unusual amongst the Beacon schemes as Bassetlaw had no established youth engagement mechanisms at the start and the work with the support of Norfolk involved preparing the Council and its partners for such initiatives. Young people therefore only began to be contacted at the very end of the programme. This partnership is working generally on engaging a cross section of target groups.

#### *Wakefield, with North East Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire*

This project aimed to spread the experience of Wakefield in the original Beacon programme to the other two authorities. It used specialist youth arts workers to begin with young people's interests and develop skills and confidence in order to increase opportunities for involvement and influence the design and delivery of services. These authorities aimed to involve looked after young people, care leavers, young people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic groups and asylum seekers.

#### *West Sussex, with Brighton and Hove and East Sussex*

This partnership built on the initial work in West Sussex with looked after young people to further that work and to help the other authorities develop their approaches to this target group. It hoped to enable these young people to engage pro-actively with their local authority and to increase the opportunities to act as a peer mentor to other looked after young people. This scheme originally had no other specific PSA4 target groups. Funding became available at the end of the Beacon programme and an additional piece of work with young parents was approved, making them another specific target group. The evaluation of this later work has been integrated as far as possible into this report.

#### *Wirral, with Liverpool and Knowsley*

In this instance, the work set out to involve more young people in strategy and governance in the local authorities, particularly harder to reach groups such as NEET, looked after young people, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and black and minority ethnic young people. A strong focus developed in Wirral, Liverpool and Knowsley on building appropriate structures to involve looked after young people.

All these schemes continued to develop to a greater or lesser degree over the two years of the programme from the original outline in the funding application but the overall range of approaches was retained.

## **4.2 Types of volunteering and engagement undertaken**

The questionnaires to young people asked about the nature of their involvement. They were asked to identify the activities in which they had been most involved and some chose more than one item. The responses are set out in Figure 4.1 below. Since these are not drawn from a random sample and

in any case are weighted towards those schemes with the highest number of questionnaire responses, they cannot be taken as a valid statistical reflection of the most common activities. They do, however, reflect the varied approaches adopted to youth engagement of the Beacon schemes. The most commonly identified activities concerned 'representational' work in democratic structures – the task of representing others on a forum, advisory group or funding panel or portraying the needs of young people to those in authority. Approximately one third were involved in direct volunteering to help service users in the public service arena. 15% said they had mentored others.

**Figure 4.1 Types of volunteering in which young people said they had been most involved**

<b>Activities identified</b>	<b>Percentage of young people responding (N=118)</b>
Youth arts.	11%
Attending a youth forum or parliament.	40%
Attending an advisory group on a particular service.	20%
Representing a particular group or area on a youth forum, or advisory group.	38%
Being a mentor to other young people.	15%
Being a volunteer helping people (like sports coaching, or visiting the elderly).	29%
Producing a newsletter.	10%
Interviewing for new staff.	7%
Helping to write guidelines for adults who work with young people.	12%
Inspecting services, evaluating services or mystery shopping.	16%
Film making to portray needs of young people.	6%
Working on panels to decide funding bids (YOF etc.)	8%
Training of elected Members or presentations to them.	5%
Residentials, trips, fun activities & 'other' (unspecified).	7%

In the focus groups, the young people gave accounts of the work they had been involved in. This will not be an exhaustive list of all the forms of work that have been undertaken through the Beacon programme but it serves to confirm the variety listed above and provide more detail on the nature of the activities.

- Volunteers had worked in local authority departments and services (and to some extent in voluntary organisations). They had been involved in dealing with the public, finance and administration, surveys and reports, work with children, and youth club work.
- Looked after young people had been involved in film making and various presentations to officers and Elected Members (to increase

awareness about the needs of looked after children and the realities of fostering).

- Some young people including looked after young people had become peer mentors to other young people joining participation groups or becoming involved in volunteering.
- Several groups had been involved in the recruitment of staff or volunteers for local authority services (such as Connexions or the Youth Offending Service) or in one case for a voluntary organisation.
- Some groups had been involved in the design of services or documentation (for example, a one stop shop for Connexions or new complaints forms) or in advising on 'marketing'. *"Giving advice [to services, so that they can] gain more people."*
- One Beacon with its partners has focused on inspecting and mystery shopping in order to give feedback and improve public services. This included awareness of health and safety issues in centres.
- The young parents group was involved in peer education delivering PSHE sessions dealing with the issues of teenage pregnancy. The Beacon scheme enabled this group to develop a film, curriculum packs and a magazine to support the work in schools.  
*"When we started there was no one else around like us – we raised awareness."*
- Nearly all the groups had also had residential or fun and leisure activities, often as a means of building team work, for example young people mentioned a spa day, horse riding, paint balling, meals out, trips, bowling, and rock climbing.

Some of the comments from young people at interview illustrate this variety.

*"Started by going to London really. Lobbying the MP. We couldn't catch him but we went to meet Gordon Brown at Number 10 Downing Street. I've been involved through my youth worker for about three years."*

*"Well my youth worker told me about the project. It was about a play to show what we want in the area, and to show what to do, and how we should get recognised..."*

*"We're peer mentors. We support these lads."*

*"We meet on a Tuesday night. We've run two inspections so far. It's to get young people's views on different places, not just speaking to the managers, who are bound to be positive about their services. It's easier for young people to talk to young people... We've had to report at high levels in the Town Hall, so people do want to take notice of us because we're speaking to 'Town Hall'...Centres get copies of our reports...and they have two weeks to come back to us... and tell us what changes they're going to make...It makes you feel good that you're helping young people and they really appreciate it."*

*"We are in [a group for young people in care] so that we can ask the Councillors for what we want...Ownership was where we are in charge: we were telling them what we wanted. It was our idea [to produce] the pledge and*



*the name and the logo... [The pledge] it's like a contract. We've told Social Services what we want...We are designing a DVD now for young people in care to say what to expect."*

It is important to understand that young people do not necessarily describe these sorts of activities as volunteering. They do see themselves as giving up their time without being paid to help others or improve the situation in their local community but they may not always use the term 'volunteering.' Despite their terminology, Appendix B shows just how the activities of each partnership do fall within the definition of volunteering.

*"Young people don't think of much of what they do as volunteering, they don't see this as volunteering, even though it is. For all but one, it's their first time they've been involved in volunteering – they see volunteering as going into old people's homes."* (Local worker.)

It should be noted that several of the authorities involved in the Beacon partnerships employed young people on a full-time or part-time basis to support other young people in engagement. These paid posts were termed for example 'young advisers', 'youth engagement workers' or apprentices. The posts were held by young people who had started out as volunteers and who had now progressed to employment helping and supporting others. In the view of the research team, posts of this nature are not 'volunteering', which in essence involves giving of personal time to be of service without pay. While we have not included them in the analysis of the volunteer roles that young people played for the purposes of this report, we still regard their use as an entirely valid and helpful way of promoting and supporting youth engagement and volunteering. It is exciting to see young people coming through volunteering to paid positions supporting others and then progressing further in their chosen careers. Appropriate training and continuing staff development are obviously essential but given that support, such posts can provide not only capacity but innovation in methods and a high level of empathy and understanding for the new cohort of volunteers. The young people from such posts who met with the research team demonstrated impressive skills and commitment.

### **4.3 Reaching socially excluded young people**

The evaluation team was concerned to ascertain whether or not the Peer Support programme succeeded in its objective of reaching socially excluded young people, particularly those in the PSA4 target groups (people with no qualifications, minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities). Demographic characteristics were collected in the young people's questionnaires and note was also made of the representation in the different groups of young people encountered on the research visits.

The questionnaires returned by young people showed that across the programme overall there was some representation of all the PSA4 target groups. Respondents showed by their answers to the demographic questions that out of the 118 responding, two or more fell into each of the categories of

NEET, refugees/asylum seekers, those in care or formerly in care, BME young people, those with disabilities or learning difficulties, those who had 'been in trouble with the police', and young and/or lone parents. The returns showed a strong response from black and minority ethnic groups and from young people who were currently looked after or had been in care, and these young people were not confined to schemes that had specifically targeted those particular groups. Lewisham and Lancashire showed the strongest returns from BME groups. Three authorities had no response from BME young people in the questionnaires returned. West Sussex and Wirral had the strongest responses from young people who had been in care or were looked after at present. NEET young people were not well represented in the returns, which may reflect the age range of respondents and the use of schools as a major route for contact. The questionnaires showed responses from an age range of 10 to 25 years and clustering in the 14 to 17 year-old age band. Males and females were almost evenly distributed.

The questionnaires did not produce a large enough return to provide a clear indication of the degree of contact with the target groups. When taken with the evidence from focus groups, individual interviews and the baseline returns from the authorities, all schemes could be said to have reached their target groups and included vulnerable young people to some degree and for some authorities this represented new experience. In addition to the above groups, one or more of the schemes also included young carers and lesbian, gay or bisexual young people. The analysis of the benefits to the young people shows that they were felt by many of those in the target groups and reports of individual cases show that major personal development occurred for some young people in those groups. Some areas however clearly struggled with the challenges of involving the new groups they had chosen and these difficulties are reflected in the section below on the barriers to engagement.

*"We are working closely with a Bangladeshi organisation and doing some work around young people from different cultures using services, which was not happening before."* (Local worker.)

#### **4.4 Reaching into public services to create new opportunities for volunteering and engagement**

Youth Service personnel were the professional category most frequently delivering and promoting the Beacon schemes. The evidence from the adult questionnaires shows however that the programmes did contact and involve many officers in other local authority services and to some extent workers within voluntary sector partner organisations. Adult respondents were asked to indicate the type of service within which they worked. Of the 76 respondents, 68% were from local authority services, 17% were from the voluntary sector and the remainder were drawn from Connexions, health related services, and research and consultancy providers. Five respondents were elected Members. Other than Youth Service staff, local authority services were represented by numerous other professional groups including social work, teaching, finance and support services, policy and strategy

officers, children and young people's services, libraries and museums, environmental health and the park ranger service.

Lancashire and its partners placed young people as volunteers within local authority departments and centres. This was the only scheme placing volunteers in departments in this way and there is therefore only a relatively small amount of evidence on the effect of this particular approach on local authority services. This may have been a missed opportunity to explore a type of volunteering about which relatively little research is available. In the main the other schemes were concerned with shaping and improving services to young people and for specific groups through inspection or presentations to decision makers, film or drama performances, or in developing the youth structures to engage with and influence service delivery and democratic decision-making. Some young people moved on from one form of engagement to pick up further volunteering.

*"Because we took them to this Youth Event...they're all now really interested in getting involved in campaigning – but they wouldn't see this as volunteering."* (Local worker.)

*"One of the group was already heavily involved in volunteering. For the others volunteering has increased on this project – from one day a week to three or four days a week in the summer. One young person did some other volunteering over the summer too – he learnt commitment on this project and carried it across."* (Local worker.)

#### **4.5 How the schemes were promoted**

The Beacon projects showed a variety of ways of promoting the opportunities to young people. In the focus groups, young people were asked how they had heard about the volunteering and engagement opportunities. As found in the national picture (see Section 3 above), much of the recruitment was by word of mouth through youth clubs or youth workers in their areas and participation workers had given presentations at community centres, youth projects and schools. Some groups had been contacted through their specialist workers particularly social workers and foster carers for those who were looked after. Some had been referred by agencies such as Connexions or schools. In some cases the young people were nominated or elected to represent their own organisation at an event or on a youth parliament or forum. One borough used the criterion of young people eligible for free school meals and targeted 2600 through a website which offered £30 a month of 'credits' to do positive activities. Some became involved as volunteers in a peer inspection scheme. This website also advertised volunteering opportunities – getting 35 calls a week from young people wanting to be volunteers.

*"The website is good, it's got blogs and activities. I've got £150 worth of credits so far."* (Young person.)

#### **4.6 How the programme related to the strategic priorities of the local authorities**

The local councils involved in the Beacon Peer Support Programme put forward a range of reasons for their involvement. These differing motivations often related to particular stages of their service development or responses to key government policies. These agendas helped to shape the approach to methods and the type of volunteering and engagement that was needed. The rationale for involvement commonly centred around one or more of the following issues:

- The need to make the Youth Offer a reality, often with a 'pledge' or 'charter' about what young people might expect, as indicated in the national guidelines on Positive Activities for Young People (DCSF, 2008).
- The significant changes involved in developing a Strategic Plan for Children and Young People and the requirement that the planning cycles informing Children's Trusts should enable children and young people to be involved at different levels (HM Government, 2006).
- Hear by Right and the need for the Council itself to involve young people pro-actively in democracy and decision-making influenced several partnerships (Wade et al, 2001).
- Devolution was an issue for some areas with a need to involve young people more in mechanisms such as community area forums and to reduce the tensions and lack of understanding between adults and young people at local level.
- In some authorities particular services had made requests for 'customer' feedback such as libraries, Primary Care Trusts, or criminal justice agencies.
- One partnership was involved in a move to unitary authority status and local government reorganisation. There was a perceived need to ensure that young people had a position in the planning and delivery of services in the new scenario.
- Another partnership was concerned about the profile of local authority staff, especially in terms of age and ethnicity. There is a need to ensure a continuity of entrants to local government of appropriate diversity. *"We have an increasingly old staff profile. We don't think 'young people...It's about shaping services. It fits the agenda."* (Local authority officer.)

Given the evidence of this study it is possible to conclude that the involvement of young people in volunteering and engagement could and did benefit not only the individuals (see Section 5 below) but also the authorities concerned on these agendas (see Section 7 below).

#### **4.7 Exit strategies and referral of young people to further opportunities**

There was little evidence from the focus groups or interviews of systematic referral to further volunteering opportunities. Where there was a wish on the

part of young people to continue in voluntary roles, it appeared mostly to be sustaining the same group or participation structure.

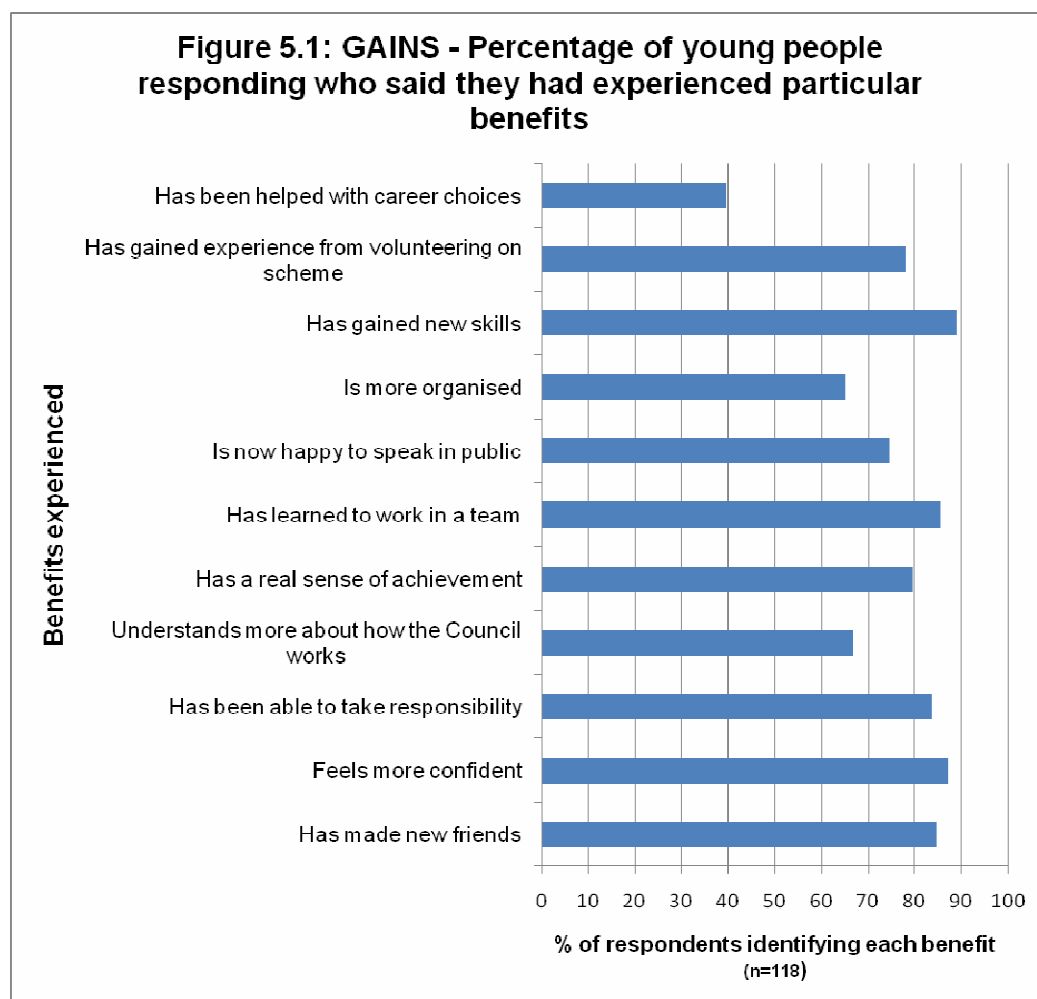
- In one scheme, the funded volunteer programme ended with the Beacon programme but the county will be starting a v scheme for full-time volunteering in the future.
- In one authority the Beacon group worked on a number of initiatives, many of which will continue in their own right having made various changes in order to accommodate the young people.
- Some of the looked after young people have asked for funding for video making equipment to make a film themselves about their group. They intend to continue meeting and want to record some of their work to show to others such as parents, social workers, or friends outside the 'looked after' system.
- In another area some of the young people simply wanted to continue. Some had been referred to a youth work apprenticeship scheme or 'V – cashpoint'.
- In one Beacon authority, the youth participation structures are particularly well embedded after a number of years and are well supported at corporate level. Here it is likely that the participation of the target groups will continue to develop well. This pattern is followed to some extent in the other more successful schemes.
- In some authorities, a number of young people have taken up full-time or part-time paid positions on participation teams or youth work teams. A number of others have gone on to college or university, with some retaining a part-time role. A number had taken up youth work apprenticeships.

## Section 5: The personal benefits for the young people

There is little doubt that the vast majority of young people taking part in the volunteering and engagement schemes offered by the local authorities involved in the Beacon peer support programme did gain from their experiences. The evidence is confirmed from the written questionnaires, young people's testimony in focus groups or interviews, and the examples given by adult respondents.

### 5.1 Evidence from the young people's questionnaires

The survey results indicated that of the 118 young people who responded, 46 young people thought they had benefited 'very much' from being involved in the project, while 52 said they had benefited 'quite a lot' and 14 said 'a bit'. 6 respondents did not answer the question but nobody chose the option that they had not benefited at all. The young people were also asked whether they had experienced any of a list of potential gains, with the choice of answering 'yes', 'no' or 'don't know'. Figure 1 below shows how many said they had benefited in each aspect.



The highest response was for a perception that they had 'gained new skills' (89%), closely followed by feeling more confident (87.3%), having learned to work in a team (85%) and having made new friends (84.7%). The lowest response relatively speaking was for the young people feeling they understood 'more about how the Council works' (66.9%). While this is low in comparison to other responses, it is still a very strong response given the general lack of awareness amongst young people of the functions of local government. This is extremely important given the complex role of present day local authorities not just in providing services but in commissioning and designing them.

## 5.2 Evidence from the focus groups and interviews with young people

As a warm up exercise in most of the focus groups, the young people wrote 'text messages' to a friend to tell them about the programme they had been involved in. These texts bring the benefits to life in the terms (however ungrammatical) used by young people themselves. Examples are given below.

- *Been involved in volunteering project – totally epic! Met loads of new people from [our town] and all over the place. Got tons of ideas for youth forum stuff and done volunteering qualification. Well worth getting into!*
- *Hi me had a good time mystery shopin 2 day thought it great coz Jim [pseudonym for worker] now we granda and we beet him at badminton.*
- *OMG Hun! This volunteering fing is qyt gud! Lol I didn't fink itd be dis gud lol. U Shud try it owt!*
- *Areet M8. This ... group is mint. It's cool meeting new ppl and stuff. It's a mint feelin being part and representing [my borough].*
- *You learn to work in a team and learn new skills. Also the food was fantastic.*
- *Areet Waaz, I'm @ [PYE group]. Its well cushty we discover what places oru their r gd 4 yp. Nd which places aint. It's a great team I luv cumin ere.*
- *Lad, what is up 2! In work ya no. Decent like work with loads of different kids get 2 do loads of different stuff.*
- *SOZ...I'm in a meetin which is about children in care and they say am helpin them by give them advice!!!*
- *Now then! You alright? Just texting to tell you I'm off the boat [local scheme activity]. It's great. I've made loads of good friends, they're really nice. They told me to write a text to someone so I'll tell you about SYB. Granted 2 groups, having problems with one though. Will see you later.*

- *Hiyaa, how ya diddlin? I am into volunteering as you should know. I think you should get involved. I do the [youth news] paper for kids [in our town] and I am also involved with V-involved and the Youth Opportunity Fund. And also get involved with other random things like activity days, events, discos. Does this interest you, it should it's so fun!*

At all the focus groups, the young people were asked **what they had gained** from the experience. Italics indicate the words used by young people themselves either on flipcharts or posts-its or as recorded verbatim by the interviewer. By far the greatest level of response was about gains in confidence. A significant number of comments concerned gains in job skills and related experience; increased communication skills and team work, and making new friends. This echoes closely the findings from the written questionnaires.

Examples of young people's comments are set out below in relation to the main benefits they identified in the focus group discussions. The young people conveyed a strong sense that they saw themselves as giving service to others and took a pride in making a positive contribution, even though many ruefully pointed out how long it took for things to happen.

#### Gains in confidence

- *"I'm more confident and knowledgeable. What I have got out of this is more confidence with my speaking and I feel I am being heard and my world does mean something."*
- *"Nervous – my journey- more confident."*
- *"Feel special."*
- *"Meet famous people!"*
- *"Good attitude."*
- *"I'm proud because of me confidence to talk to all the Councillors."*
- *"Achieving things I wouldn't be able to achieve before."*

#### Improved social skills, making friends

- *"From coming here I have gained qualification in participation with young people and communications skills. Also I have gained security and friends."*
- *"I have developed my people and communication skills and more confidence."*
- *"I've learned to think before I speak; be more diplomatic."*
- *"And I hate talking in front of adults. But then [the worker] noticed and she got me to speak. Now I don't really mind."*
- *"Learn about the value of things."*
- *"Spend loads of time with people and meeting new friends."*
- *"[I] speak out more freely."*
- *"I think that I've been able to socialise more and have a lot of fun."*
- *"Good support – becoming like one big family."*
- *"Happiness from the people."*



- *"I am able to make decisions on things that affect me and I have gained knowledge and widened my social capital."*
- *"Team working skills and team building."*

Experience for CV, employment related skills and job search

- *"I have been able to gain other skills for example I have taken part in a youth participation course and peer mentoring course. This is helping my CV and myself in the future and I have also met new people."*
- *"Enhance applications to universities or college."*
- *"Improve employment prospects."*
- *"To get an experience of real-life work."*
- *"I can now be confident in an office environment. I can do all of what has been asked of me over the eight weeks and basic admin work."*
- *"I know how to be more professional."*
- *"School help, i.e. you are good."* [School can see that you are engaged in positive activities].
- *"I do this as it's a good stepping stone for me and will help me get a better career. Plus it's fun and flexible."*
- *"More life opportunities: it's made me like an entrepreneur."*

Being able to make a positive contribution

- *"I've been able to make a positive contribution which will improve my immediate society [in this borough]. I've also learnt how to work as a team. I've also got great training opportunities."*
- *"Talking to Heads of Service and young people – useful skills for working with authority and young people."*
- *"One to one mentor training – helped me in myself."*
- *"It causes changes in people – positive changes – it pushes you."*
- *"When we were in care we didn't get our voice heard. We can see what we've missed out on. When we was in care there was no [forum like this]."*
- *"They have learned a lot of stuff through us and other young people. And they once was young like."*
- *"We had 20-25 councillors and officers [at the event]. Some of them have a better understanding now of what it's like to be in care."*
- *"New people will come in and you will help them out. We are getting older ourselves – it's a cycle of teaching the next people who come."*
- *"I've helped several [others] apply for university or sixth form college and they all said they volunteer on the Youth Council and see their role as helping other young people have a voice."*
- *"People of authority made me feel valued for my input."*

Having fun

- *"Never get bored."*
- *"Have fun and trips we choose like bowling, rock climbing, eating out. Something positive to do."*
- *"Now I get up and about."*
- *"New experiences."*

Learning to mix with people from other backgrounds

- *"I can talk to different people with more confidence."*

- *“Cultural issues – less stereotypical.”*
- *“I learn that different people do things in their own way.”*
- *“See how people treat others – discrimination.”*
- *“Meeting new people from different [areas].”*
- *“Respect and knowledge of different people.”*

#### Specific technical skills

- *“Learnt camera and sound skills.”*
- *“How to use the sound boom.”*
- *“I know now how to do various finance-related office work such as how to input creditors into the system.”*
- *“The [computer programme] – I couldn’t work that. It’s used to analyse answers to questions. I couldn’t do it. The man who came to train us was dead boring. Probably my own fault because I didn’t listen. But with the support of the team I did learn.”*

#### Specific awards or accreditation

- AQA Award (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance)
- Youth participation qualification
- ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network)

#### Wider knowledge of local services and provision

- *“I have gained knowledge of things that I would have been oblivious of (events in the borough).”*
- *“Knowledge about issues that impact on young people.”*
- *“I know more about what the environmental services do within the council.”*
- *“I didn’t know [this council] had services like [this] resource centre. I always thought these services were privately run.”*
- *“Not scared, maybe a bit wary. Before I went I didn’t really know what a councillor was.”*

The individual interviews with young people produced ample confirmation of the main benefits of the schemes in raising their confidence, and improving their social and job related skills. Some of the examples they gave of what had happened to them showed subtle relationships between their improved self-image and how they fared in other contexts. In several cases, the young people could see that adults had changed their perceptions of them and this could mean that they were no longer so trapped in negative positions.

*“I’d been getting into trouble in school and my head of year had been pointing in my face and making out I’m horrible and he called me ‘a horrible little dick’. Yes – he swore at me and then I showed him this [his folder of work] and it shows I’m not horrible ...now he’s dead canny to us, since I’ve shown him what I do.”* (Young person undertaking accreditation.)

*“Being involved in [this project] has given me so much more confidence and I get lots of chances to run sessions and take responsibility for booking rooms, residentials and organising things... We get to go out a lot for social nights out which helps me as well.”* (Young carer, previously shy, withdrawn and underachieving.)

*"I did my first presentation in school and I didn't feel very comfortable with the young people. The youth worker suggested I volunteer at the youth club. She also worked at using my cartoon skills. I loved it and the worker in charge there put me on the youth work training. Now I have taken over at that club."*  
(Young parent.)

### **5.3 Evidence from adults about the benefits to the young people**

The young people's responses were corroborated by evidence from adults in their questionnaires and interviews and through the Positive Incident records, where some of the case examples showed obvious and profound change.

One young woman had volunteered at an animal rescue centre. She had now gained employment at a charity working to reduce cruelty to animals. Another young person in foster care had changed her behaviour at family meetings, which previously often broke down in arguments. She now used skills she had learned at the youth forum such as setting an agenda, taking turns to chair and taking minutes. Family relationships had improved dramatically. Two young men who both had epilepsy had been bullied in the past. They were now volunteering in youth clubs, fund raising, helping to make decisions and taking responsibilities such as receiving subscriptions. A young woman who had been too nervous to perform in a drama project had eventually gained confidence to such an extent that she was now volunteering in a project with the Polish community. A young man with ADHD (attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder) had developed through his project and began to support and help another boy who had autism – *"in the first few sessions, he was just there to cause mischief, but he ended up being a star."*

One authority returned 'before' and 'after' assessments for the volunteers, using an 'outcomes wheel' in a judgement of their position arrived at jointly between the worker and the young person. A high proportion of this group were from minority ethnic communities. The assessments show gains for many of the young people on dimensions such as communication skills, interpersonal skills and confidence and motivation for entering the world of work. Some had improved language skills, while others had achieved academic targets.

One young woman of dual heritage had been an offender herself but has worked with the Youth Offending Service to help make the service more accessible. She is now undertaking an access course and starting a project on gun and knife crime. *"I'm what society calls 'difficult to reach'. I know what it's like. I was there and now I'm here helping others. Doing loads of voluntary work... from ghetto to young lady!"*

A homeless young woman was invited to a youth forum and supported by a youth worker at a school for young people at risk of exclusion. She had 'run away' from her home which was shared with seven brothers and sisters. After her experience at the forum, she decided to go back to her parents as she was now clear that she did not want to continue to drift.

Volunteers as peer mentors on a project for looked after young people were those on their way out of care who have dealt with their own issues sufficiently. They had been trained in topics such as confidentiality, boundaries, challenging behaviour, and safeguarding. They were supervised one-to-one on a monthly basis and completed a Platinum Youth Achievement Award.

'Mark' became involved with a Youth Parliament and took part in a scheme to inspect services. As a result of childhood disease he lost both legs, one arm and the fingers from his other hand. He very much wanted to 'be heard' and felt that his education had faltered because of attending a special school and the stigma it carried.

During the project he became involved on equal terms with young people who did not have physical disabilities and felt it was '*nice to be accepted*'. He initiated a major debate for young people about proposed closures of special needs schools and mainstream integration.

In the words of the worker who supported him on the project "*most of his life he has been told 'You can't or you shouldn't because of your disability and you might hurt yourself'. However he has now realised he CAN DO things.*"

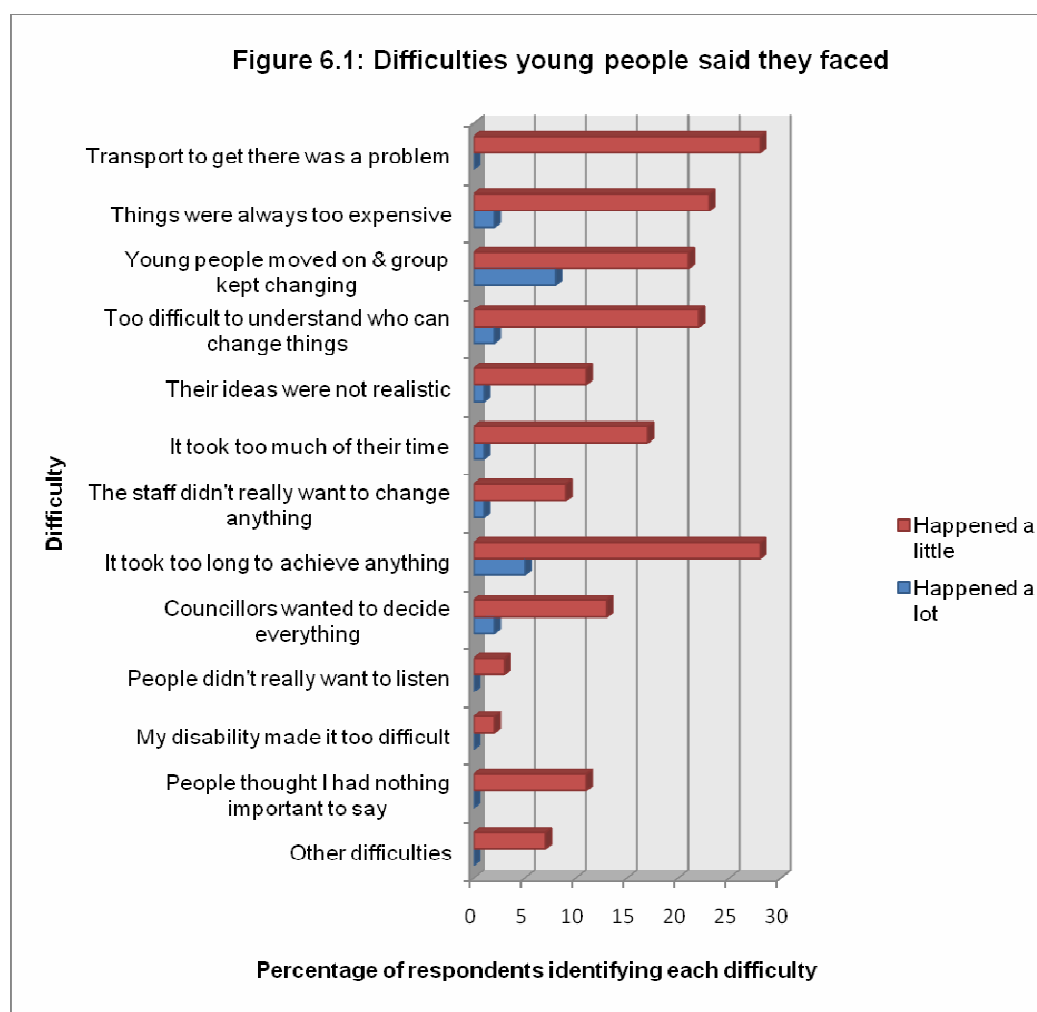
In Mark's own words at interview with one of the researchers "*I have been in a special school most of my life and have not had confidence. I hadn't met 'normal' young people. But I've known [the worker] for 4-5 years and got involved with the Youth Parliament and [this project] and made lifelong friends – out of it I might get a house with 'Jason' from this group. We've been on residential and I don't want things to be set up all around me...we were going to do stuff like bird watching, just because of me, so I could join in, but I didn't want that. Instead I did it, did it on my knees, crawled, and jumped, and fell - because I don't have legs, but I did it...and everyone was jumping into the water and the staff didn't want me to join in, and didn't think I could swim, but I showed them I could. I was one of the strongest swimmers in the group. This has changed the attitude of staff a bit – not just seeing people like me as disabled...and I realised I'm not 'disabled', I'm 'abled' – able to do so much.*"

## Section 6: Barriers and solutions

### 6.1 Difficulties encountered

It was a major feature of the research brief, that the evidence on the barriers to youth engagement should be collected together with any solutions identified. Information on the barriers encountered came from questions on the written questionnaires and in interviews with both young people and adults.

The questionnaires to young people asked them to indicate whether or not they had encountered particular difficulties on the schemes. Figure 6.1 below shows the difficulties they said they encountered either 'a lot' or 'a little'. Very few of the problems were perceived to any significant degree as happening 'a lot' – only the mobility of group membership and the length of time it took to achieve change. In respect of difficulties that happened 'a little', young people cited transport problems and the length of time it took to achieve things most frequently. These factors were echoed in qualitative written comments and in the focus group findings.



A free-text box on the questionnaire also invited comment on what **“the worst thing”** had been about their involvement. A similar question was also raised in several of the focus groups. These quotations in italics illustrate the same sorts of difficulties as the quantitative responses.

The timescale to achieve results

- *“Frustration at timings at times.”*
- *“When we were doing pledges they took too long.”*
- *“Time it took to sort out football coaching volunteering slot, needed CRB.”*
- *“Not much was done if anything at all.”*
- *“It moved on slowly and some things took too long to decide.”*

Personal time factors

- *“For some, it takes over their life! Others don't get enough from it and drop out quickly not spending enough time doing the work for it to make a real difference to their lives.”*
- *“Difficulty in balancing volunteering with new college term.”*
- *“The worst part was I was sometimes in work and was not involved in the meetings.”*
- *“The dates when other things are happening kept clashing with my other commitments.”*
- *“Taking up free time.”*

Commitment required

- *“It was hard work and long days.”*
- *“No worse thing, but I did get tired.”*
- *“Not such a bad thing, but once involved in one thing, wanting to make a difference is addictive!”*

Relationships

- *“I am one of the younger ones and sometimes felt a bit humiliated. Some of the older members were not as mature as I thought they would be.”*
- *“I found the age range slightly hard to deal with, but it was nice to get everyone's perspective!”*
- *“Some of the arguments that happened.”*
- *“Territorial groups.”*
- *[There's] “always someone who wants everyone to fail.”*

Poor responses from adults

- *“People that treat you differently because you are young.”*
- *“People not taking you seriously, e.g. adults not listening, stropky councillors.”*
- *“People promising they will do something for your project but not doing it or not delivering on their promise.”*

Transport

- *“Transport issues - takes a long time to get places.”* (Mentioned many times.)

Having to speak up in public

- *“Being put on the spot.”*
- *“Did not enjoy having to speak in front of everyone. However I am getting better at this.”*

Lack of recognition

- *“No one else really knows about it.”*
- *“It is sometimes demoralising to find that the efforts I and other young people I work with are not recognised by the community. For example work that was invested into a community newspaper did not seem to be recognised until about a year into the project.”*
- *“People not appreciating the amount of time and commitment put in by the volunteers.”*

Formality

- *“It was very formal.”*
- *“Felt very formal.”*
- *“Boring meetings.”*

The gap in the evidence is a picture of those young people who dropped out of the schemes. The responses, especially those from the adults, may reflect that to some extent but there is no means of knowing from this data what the key causes of drop out actually were or how great the numbers who did not continue were on each project.

## **6.2 Barriers facing particular groups**

The particular target groups of the programme did face specific difficulties but they also had many general issues in common. They all shared a fear that adults would view them in stereotypical ways. They feared being judged or dismissed as having nothing to contribute. In broad terms they also faced institutionalised hurdles in the lack of resources to meet their specific needs or the failure to adapt service responses in the way they needed. The manner in which ageism is institutionalised can have excluding and debilitating effects very similar to those at work in institutional racism or sexism.

It is true to say that some young people from each of the target groups of the programme were recruited into volunteering and engagement. However, in general it appears that Beacon partnerships found it somewhat easier to contact young people in a known or static cohort (such as young people in special schools or looked after young people in residential care) than target groups that were more widely spread in the wider population (such as black and minority ethnic groups or NEET young people). The need to have an accurate profile of such groups, their incidence and where they are likely to be contacted is an important first step. One partnership for example expected a significant proportion of minority ethnic adolescents in a certain area but found that recently arrived families tended to be young workers with small children rather than families with teenagers.

### **Young people with learning difficulties or disabilities**

Young people with physical disabilities feared being left out or judged to be incapable of contributing. A number of examples were given of such reactions from those who met them in the course of their volunteering, such as a coach company that did not wish to transport a physically disabled young person with the rest of the group. In one authority young people with special needs

identified that there were often many activities available to them but that they were often ignored when it came to decision making. Both those with physical disabilities and those with specific learning needs on occasion required adaptation of the means of communication and/or routes to accreditation. One Beacon scheme designed a communication 'passport' to help young people with specific needs explain their requirements to people who met them. For example, it might indicate that they tended to shout at people or that a particular gesture meant 'yes' or 'no'. The same scheme produced an adapted OCN module on volunteering for those with learning difficulties.

### **Young people without qualifications or NEET (not in education, employment or training)**

There was relatively little direct evidence about the barriers facing this group. In the main they came into the programme through Youth Service or Connexions workers with whom they had a trusting relationship. Many of these young people have had repeated set-backs in education and in their attempts to find employment. They may feel they have 'failed' or have little to contribute. Some may simply be in a transition stage between steps in their education or career. Others can be NEET but suffering multiple other disadvantages at the same time. It was clear in several of the focus groups that the fear of being 'put on the spot' or asked to read or write in public was often connected to poor literacy skills or general educational underachievement. As has been noted in other studies, for these young people, the supportive and trusting relationship with the workers was critical together with the recognition of small steps of progress or 'soft outcomes' (Hoggarth and Smith, 2004). Practical needs may have to be dealt with before real engagement can take place and few of these young people are likely to have the ability to fund costs of volunteering such as travel or special clothing.

### **Looked after young people**

Looked after young people who talked to the researchers clearly felt that they faced prejudice and ignorance from adults about being in care. Stereotypes were applied that were not helpful and responses could be discriminatory. In one case, a young man felt that senior officers had not believed things that had happened to looked after young people. He and others had experienced not being taken on holiday because of cost when foster carers took their own children away. He had had to press his point that this had occurred in his own experience before the officer would agree to look into it.

Interviewer: *So do you think it's good that they've made this film?*

Young person: *Yeah, definitely...*

*But I think that like it should be shown to more people than our social workers, people like that because I think that if more people saw it then more people would stop being so judgemental over things.*

Interviewer: *Right.*



Young person: *And like there's like two sides. It's either care's absolutely amazing or care's like absolutely rubbish and like nobody actually understands what it's like unless they're actually in care and they're all like on the really bad side. But like most of the time it's really good coz we get loads of perks like this and like [our project] do you know what I mean and like we all get to come together and we all come from the same sort of thing so we can all understand each other and feel like really safe talking to each other because we all know they're not gonna go blurt it out like they're not gonna go blurting their secrets out. It's really cool.*

(With permission from Beacon project, acknowledged with thanks – an extract from a transcribed radio interview with a looked after young person, about a project for looked after young people that created a film to portray life in care more accurately.)

Workers argued that this group often had few qualifications and especially needed accreditation for the work they undertook.

Several comments were also made about the procedural barriers facing looked after young people: procedures for being allowed to attend participation activities are often unduly complex. Agreement may have to be given by a foster carer and the young person's social worker before they can join a group that most other young people would go to without necessarily even their parents' permission. For any activity or staying away from home, a risk assessment will be required and criminal conviction checks will usually be needed for an overnight stay at a friend's house. There were also delays in CRB checks for those undertaking peer mentoring as looked after young people tend to have moved so often.

### **Black and minority ethnic young people**

BME young people were often recruited through voluntary organisations or community groups. While this was clearly a productive strategy, in some cases the links to the local authority were not strong and the young people could be isolated or unsupported in their volunteering.

Two young women, for instance, were originally recruited through a BME project but that had lost its funding and the worker was no longer in touch. They did not appear to be well integrated in the engagement work. *"We tend to be just us wherever we go – we've always been doing this stuff."*

### **Young carers**

Young carers often cannot connect to services because of their responsibilities, particularly any services that allow them fun and self-development. Engagement initiatives need to give them that space and not simply make more demands on them.

*"I feel they need 'youth work in reverse' – rather than have help with maturing they often need a chance to be children and have some fun – they're the*

*adults at home and need some time out, need a voice... Half of [this group] were young carers and for them to be involved in this project and now to be more likely to be attend youth clubs shows a level of increased engagement with services (if not necessarily decision-making)."* (Local worker.)

## **Young parents**

The group for young women who had become teenage parents showed that most of these young people suffered from similar barriers such as lack of confidence and fears of being judged incapable of making a real contribution. Child care and travel were significant problems facing those who wished to get involved but many of them expressed this in terms of needing the money to make appropriate arrangements. Transport problems were once again frequently mentioned in questionnaires. The practical logistics are especially difficult for instance from the irregular public transport in rural areas and the problems of knowing whether the bus that arrives will have steps or not or whether it is going to be possible to cope with folding up the buggy and getting the child safely on board. In this case, the project had seen the necessity of providing child care through a local nursery which was able to take the children on an ad hoc basis when the young women were leading the peer education sessions in schools.

*"We ensured that childcare was available for children at young mums; this was funded by the project."* (Project worker.)

Financial need is such a significant problem to many of these young parents that it is hard to keep them engaged as they often cannot see what they will gain and there are no major resource incentives. Workers estimated that around 25% sustained their involvement through the whole process of preparation and training for the peer education.

With the young parents, the fears about rejection are especially high in the face of widespread moralising about teenagers who become pregnant. Many of the young women talked about how they *"are looked at like a piece of dirt."* It becomes crucial that the response of workers offers good support without judgement.

- *"You get judged by other parents. I went to a mother and toddlers group. I felt they were talking about me. I stayed for the session but I didn't go back. My children missed out."*
- *"I found that most of the mums were in their 30s – they were smug Range Rover drivers. This group was for under 21s. They offered to fetch me."*

These young women can suffer from post-natal depression. Most will feel isolated with the incessant demands of caring for a small child, perhaps without a regular or supportive partner. These particular features of teenage parenthood coupled with the all too common sense of rejection mean that the positive experience of an engagement project can be particularly valuable.

*“This was the easiest film project I’ve ever done. They just took on the roles... they gained so much. There’s been amazing positive spin off.”* (Participation worker.)

Despite current targets around reducing teenage pregnancy, this group was still experiencing funding problems. The peer education programme is used by schools and Connexions and young parents are referred onto the group by other professionals. Continuing funding is however still uncertain.

*“When we began we had to persuade schools to let us go in – we were desperate to get in there. [Now many schools use the group but do not pay towards the provision.] I heard the schools get money for this and it’s part of the curriculum but they don’t want to pay us.”* (Young woman.)

### **6.3 How adults perceived the barriers**

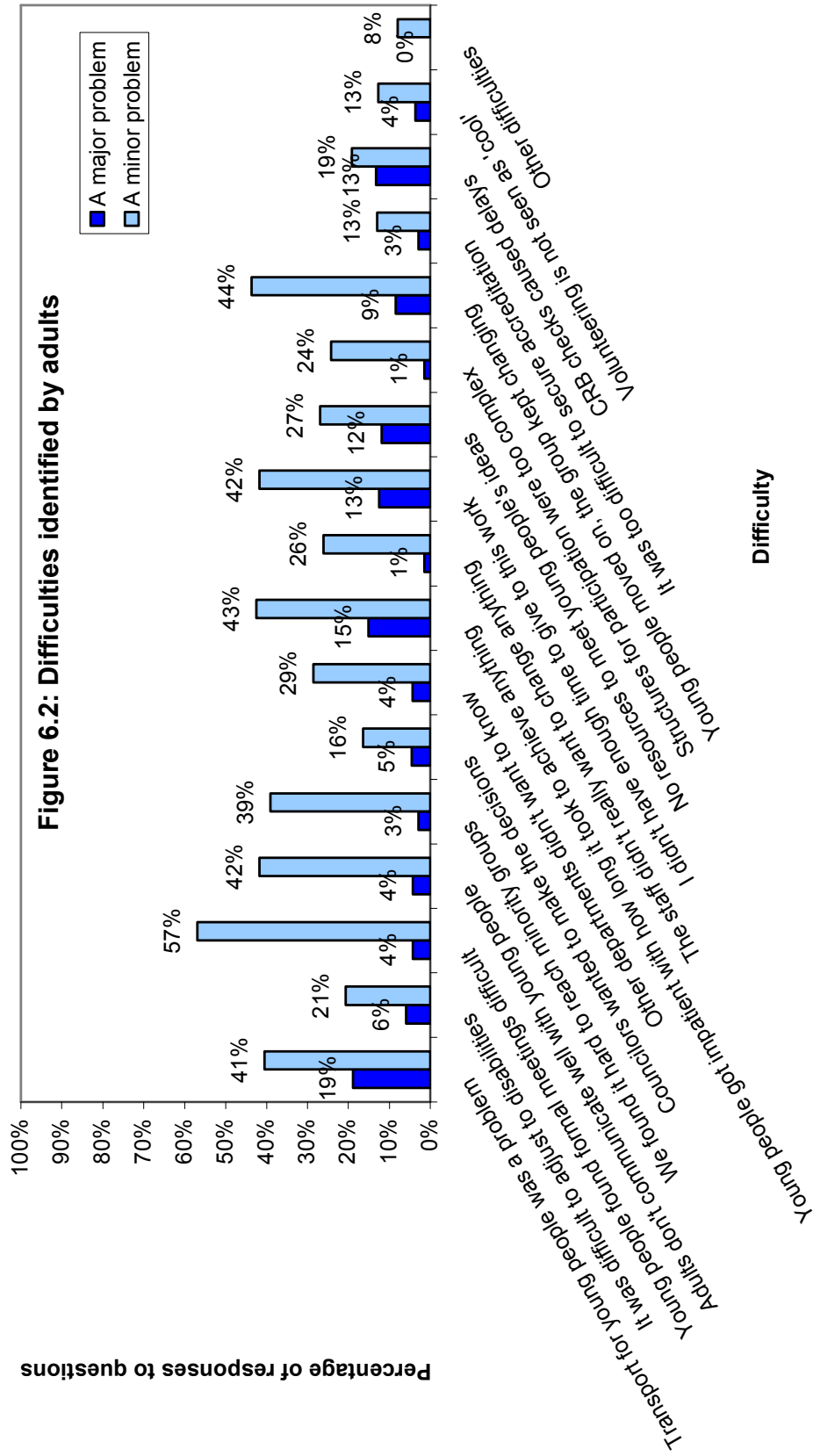
The difficulties perceived by the young people were largely mirrored in the questionnaire answers from adults. Figure 6.2 below shows how adults responded to the options provided in the survey. The perceived difficulty for young people of coping with formal meetings was seen as ‘a major problem’ by the largest number of respondents. Taking issues identified as either ‘major’ or ‘minor’ together, the difficulties of formal meetings, transport problems, and the frustration of young people at the length of time to achieve results were identified most frequently. The constantly changing group membership and mobility of young people was also a significant issue for the adults as was the amount of time they had themselves to give to the tasks of youth engagement. Young people did not place such emphasis on the formality issue in their qualitative comments but this specific option was not offered in their questionnaire.

The interviews with adult stakeholders revealed significant frustrations in some areas with the project implementation processes. On some schemes, numbers of young people taking part seem relatively low. This will have been caused in part by the need for proper support, training and accreditation processes but in the view of the research team there were also other implementation issues at work. In some partnerships, there were administrative delays with protracted processes for approval and signing off. In several, staff vacancies, secondments elsewhere of key players, or failure to appoint quickly to posts played a major part. The researchers concluded that the value of these schemes is best achieved where youth engagement is embedded and owned in the local authority and short-term funding is used to enable enhancements or extensions to an existing system of good practice in youth involvement.

### **6.4 Key barriers**

From all this evidence, we suggest that the critical barriers to youth volunteering and engagement are:

- × A lack of skilled support to ensure that young people can sustain the effort and surmount the difficulties;
- × The cost of transport, its availability locally and the distances in rural areas;
- × The frustrations from the length of time needed to achieve change;
- × A failure to embed youth volunteering and engagement fully in local authority systems;
- × The prejudice and discrimination sometimes faced by minority target groups and their consequent fears about a lack of acceptance;
- × Failure to deploy resources to meet specific needs or to adapt service responses for particular groups;
- × The time and commitment required, set against the natural mobility of young people as they progress through education and career development and the demands on their time;
- × The time required on the part of adults to set up volunteering and engagement and support it properly.
- × A lack of skills on the part of some adults in informal approaches to meetings, publicity and relationships with the young people who volunteer.



## 6.5 Dealing with the barriers

By contrast, the research has also looked in more detail at the nature of the barriers and any solutions that appeared to be effective. We have endeavoured to examine the 'realist' question of *"What worked well in enhancing youth engagement and in what circumstances?"* (Pawson and Tilley, 1997.)

In their questionnaire returns, the young people generally said that the barriers they faced were overcome. They were asked 'Were the problems sorted out so that your voice was heard?' Of the 118 responding, 32% answered 'Yes, completely'; 18.6% answered 'Yes, partly'; 2% answered 'No' and 12.7% were unsure. The remainder did not answer the question.

Worker support for the young people, the young people's commitment, training for the young people and rigorous planning and preparation were the success factors most frequently mentioned by the adults returning details of positive incidents. Other strongly represented issues included the encouragement of young people to make decisions relevant to themselves, sufficient information to make such decisions, the support of Elected Members and their training, having dedicated participation workers, and partnership working. It was seen as important to create boundaries and explain that participation was about responsibilities not simply about asking for things. The provision of practical support was seen as crucial such as welcoming locations, food and especially transport. Other issues mentioned included support of the Heads of Service (especially having a senior manager advocating for the scheme and taking responsibility for acting on young people's reports and creating a regular feedback loop). Having a professional quality of specialist provision (such as film making), team work, sufficient time for the tasks and continuity of staffing were also mentioned. Many workers saw it as crucial to keep expectations realistic. Where individuals had tasted success this led to further successes and development and those who were achieving well often had a major influence on those with chaotic lifestyles or potentially disruptive behaviour. We set out below some examples and quotations drawn from across the empirical data to illustrate these main elements of success as mentioned by respondents. The issue of support is developed separately in 6.6 below.

- *"Councillors gave that buy in. They had input in shaping it and in the tendering process. ...They were shaping it in the meeting."* (Local authority officer.)
- *"Transport is the biggest problem – two and a half grand from Beacon money ...for the year and it doesn't even cover the transport costs."* (Adult stakeholder.)
- *"It is my opinion that this project only worked because there was an adult in a relatively senior position who could act on the observations of the mystery shoppers. If they had received no feedback and action towards change was not forthcoming, they would have been disappointed, would not have continued and the information gained*

would be lost.” (Young person’s development worker, in a Primary Care Trust.)

- *“This scheme got buy in from the authorities and secured a nominated officer in each authority.”* (Project worker.)
- *“The young people have been let down in the past and were cynical.”* (Local worker.)
- *“Good youth work takes time; involving young people takes longer. Involving them in things that make sense to them; them having a meaningful role in determining what services ought to offer. We need to be clear about what is being asked of them and how they can do it so they take ownership of it – not tick a box – but involvement in the work on their terms. This can be in scrutiny, as grant-givers, as inspectors etc. It needs training and relationships with them being able to decide on their terms to make these choices.”* [County Council youth worker.]
- One worker with looked after young people felt very strongly about the issue of creating boundaries and expectations of mature behaviour having seen examples of ‘automatic’ agreement to demands in a participation context that could lead to deteriorating behaviour.
- Some schemes had found particular strength from getting together with the Beacon workers in other local authorities *“to get a regional and national perspective. You don’t often get the chance to lift your head and get different perspectives, so like the young people I’ve really enjoyed this.”* Staff do need the chance to reflect on their practice and share ideas and good practice on imaginative and sensitive approaches.

Two of the Beacon partnerships used contractual arrangements with another organisation to deliver the work with young people. One Beacon partnership commissioned a voluntary organisation to recruit young volunteers, liaise with local authority departments and support the young people. This organisation had minority ethnic workers on its staff. The local authority departments saw this ‘intermediary’ role as helpful. Contact was made with 26 service areas of which 18 were able to offer placements. Another partnership contracted a specialist arts organisation to show how innovative arts work could help young people to express their views. The evidence is that these ‘external’ arrangements had some advantages in bringing extra capacity, awareness or skills to the task of increasing youth engagement. On balance, however, both schemes appeared to suffer from problems in getting buy in at appropriate levels or in unblocking administrative delays within the local authority procedures. The danger of contracting delivery to an external partner appears to be in a potential lack of ownership of the scheme.

Figure 6.3 below summarises the barriers that appeared most important against the ways in which one or more of the authorities had tried with a degree of success to combat them. These problems appear to fall into different categories. Some were practical resource issues. Some were barriers caused by the young person’s own personal history, attitudes or abilities, or inappropriate referrals.

Others were caused by adult stakeholders, usually local authority officers, failing to cooperate or refusing to support a participation structure or strategy. In some cases, adult staff believe they are doing effective youth led work but are not: they may be blocking innovation or progress or manipulating young people towards particular structures or methods. These staff also tend to be most resistant to training about youth engagement. Local government reorganisation or service reconfiguration seemed particularly intractable: they caused problems of communication and in at least one case, severe loss of morale with consequent unwillingness to get involved in any new or additional engagement work.

**Figure 6.3: Key barriers to youth engagement and means of addressing them**

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Potential solutions</b>
<i><b>Personal barriers for young people</b></i>	
Lack of confidence.	Positive attitudes from adults; training and rehearsal in roles.
Lack of personal and practical skills.	Training, accreditation, access level courses, coaching, encouragement. Enabling young people to recognise their own successes.
Too much demand on their time.	Realistic expectations. Recruiting a wide pool of young people to share in engagement and volunteering.
Frustration at slow pace of change.	Starting with realistic expectations and explaining process. Constant feedback to young people. Enabling them to see their part in a succession of effort to change things.
Fear of prejudice or oppressive practices.	Commitment to anti-discriminatory practice. Awareness raising.
Disabilities, learning difficulties or poor educational achievement.	Adapting training and accreditation methods to enable achievement and progression. Rewarding small steps. Support from other young people.
Chaotic lives of some young people	Excellence of worker support.
<i><b>Barriers caused by a lack of practical resources</b></i>	
Cost of transport and its availability.	Transport costs or support with travel integrated in budget for youth engagement from the start and paid up front.
Need for appropriate clothes, uniform or equipment.	Can be supported financially, given evidence of need.
Young people with poor diet and often hungry.	Quality, balanced food provided at meetings and activities.
Poor disability access.	Long term investment in accessibility. Awareness raising. Young people as 'inspectors' of provision, including those with disabilities.
Need for help with childcare or caring responsibilities.	Budgeting to assist with childcare, creche provision or respite from caring duties.
<i><b>Barriers caused by adult responses</b></i>	
Senior managers not buying in.	Persuasion about contribution to service targets. Role of a Chief Executive or senior officer to champion engagement. Long term sustained strategy to embed in culture.
Elected Member resistance.	Member training. Direct meeting with young



Competition for ownership of the participation structure.	people. Reports on the benefits to the local services.
Over-formal meetings.	Recognition that multiple routes to youth engagement are required and that ownership must be corporate.
Lack of skills in involving young people.	Informal approaches and use of group work skills. Alternative formats such as arts performance, film, cartoon or visual presentation. 'Fun' elements alongside formal decision-making. Time for adults and young people to socialise, discuss issues together and pay attention to individual needs.
Resistance on the part of adults who are not engaging young people genuinely in decision-making or service improvement.	Training and modelling of informal approaches. Use of Hear by Right. Role models in senior managers. Demonstration of the benefits. Training that acknowledges experience but moves understanding further.
Inappropriate referrals to volunteering scheme.	Briefings to partners, relationship building, follow up.
<b><i>Institutional barriers</i></b>	
Length of time to get procedures, permissions or new policies signed off.	Adequate lead in time; Member and senior officer support; keeping expectations of young people realistic.
Delays in getting CRB clearances.	No solution found except adequate lead in time.
Lack of lead in time, caused by short-term funding arrangements or failure to plan for essential steps such as training or establishing accreditation.	Planning for adequate lead in time. Funders allowing for implementation time.
A historical lack of a culture of engagement with minority communities: involvement in public services not seen as possible or 'for us'.	Outreach through BME organisations and voluntary groups for particular sectors can be successful. Contact needs to be sustained and reliable with those communities once contact is established. Having workers or role models from that community may assist.
Poor disability access.	Long term investment in access improvement.
Reorganisation	No easy solutions. Senior manager leadership through change is crucial to maintaining morale and momentum.

## 6.6 The critical issue of support

When asked why the scheme had been a success for them or how the barriers had been surmounted, by far the most common response from young people concerned the 'support' they had been given. To a large extent, the adults raised the same point. It is fair to say that generally the young people did not recognise specific support from the local authority and some were not aware of the underlying agenda to improve services by involving young people.

*"No support from the local authority [apart from] staff money" [i.e. funding for staff].*

The way 'support' was perceived was in the direct support from their workers and the respondents placed enormous value on it.

This was so marked that in the later stages the analysis of the evidence has focused in particular on what 'support' actually meant. What is the nature of good support in practice? This 'unpacking' of the concept of support is drawn from all sources of data - the legacy focus groups, the Positive Impact forms completed by adult staff, the questionnaires and the interviews. The focus groups were especially helpful in illustrating young people's perceptions as the questions discussed included "Was there anything special about how the workers helped you get over any difficulties or barriers to taking part?" and "What made a difference to you in terms of support you received?" The different elements of 'support' identified are set out below. Italics indicate quotations from the young people from post its, written comments or the group discussions.

Understanding, empathy, listening, trust

- *"The worker said it was OK to express our feelings."*
- *"Support workers on this project. If I've got stuck they will help or listen ...convince you to keep calm."*
- *"Confidential support and help"* [with things outside the programme].
- *"We can come as a group and we can say things we don't want to say in front of a social worker."*
- *"Making me feel the same as everyone else and I've got someone I know I can confide in."* (A young person with physical disabilities.)
- [The workers] are *"pretty skilled. They support us and they know where to go. They are shoulders to cry on."*
- *"I lost a parent. [The worker] has been there for me at every stage."*
- *"Sticking up for us."*
- *"Adults on the project... listen. Some [other] adults were rude."*
- *"Adults are not positive towards young people. They think they have the power. "*

Approachability and flexibility, sustained relationships, creating a good atmosphere and enjoying being with young people

- *"Staff seen as friends as don't take strict role – more like peers."*
- *"Particularly approachable. They are flexible about when to meet."*
- *"I've been let down before. We need her long term. She never gives up on us. We can phone her anytime – she wouldn't mind."*
- *"Without our youth worker I'd probably be inside ... (he) is a friend, and a worker."*
- *"If you have problems at home you can ring (the worker) and she'll do what she can to help.[The worker] got me into the [drug rehabilitation programme] and since then I've been totally off the drugs...I've got this mentor here and it's helped me so much."*

- [The worker] *“was getting well involved, she was like woo-oo, and we had a big dance off and everything.”*
- *“She’s my second mother, my big sister”* [referring to worker].
- *“We all trust her – others come and go.”*

Challenging young people to progress and achieve, allowing young people to take on lead roles, not taking over or interfering

- *“Open doors.”*
- *“They assisted rather than taking over.”*
- *“Like a parental figure – showing us the ropes.”*
- *“Youth workers – they encourage...give us an extra push.”*
- *“They give you a chance to lead the group.”*
- [They] *“put stuff in we wanted in the film.”*
- *“I’m one of the treasurers, [the worker] she is just there in the background.”*

Regularity, organisation, structure and continuity of support

- *“Regular contact – support from the project workers.”*
- *“Three way meetings before going into [volunteering] placements – to support and put at ease.”*
- *“Structured and well planned volunteer placements for a specific length of time.”*
- *“Organised.”*

Group work skills of workers

- *“Warm ups and help with acting.”*
- *“We did icebreakers. And confidence.”*
- *“He’s helped us understand our aim.”*

In many cases, there was painstaking rehearsal of young people for roles they found difficult such as speaking in public or chairing a meeting. Without such help many would not have found the confidence to take on such responsibilities.

- *“If I was just told to go and do an inspection, I’d have blown my cover but I was trained.”*

Practical issues and resources

- *“Transport is paid”* [funded].
- *“People wouldn’t go if we didn’t get picked up.”* Transport was by far the most significant practical issue raised by the young people. Transport was mentioned by the groups many times. Some young people were living so far away they would not have been able to come if lifts were not organised and paid for by the project. For this group, in a rural area, this was highlighted as the key issue regarding support received. In another group it was raised as ‘essential’; it raised parental confidence in the scheme and the self-esteem of the young people.
- *“Helping find things to spend money”* [the credit scheme for positive activities].

- *“Residential are paid”* [funded].

Enjoyment and mutual support from other young people

- [We keep coming because] *“we all enjoyed it the last time.”*
- *“Support from each other.”*
- *“The [two] workers...and each other...”*
- [A local authority officer] *“helped me a lot over the visit to [volunteer work abroad]. The decision was down to the Chief Exec. She made the phone calls”* [to get it agreed].
- *“I feel on my own then I see all the others with their older babies – if they can get by then I can too.”* (Young parent.)

From a young person’s point of view therefore, support is a complex amalgam of the worker’s ability to create trust and keep confidence; to listen effectively and maintain a positive pro-active view of the young person’s potential, regardless of their background; to be available and reliable within known boundaries; and to resolve practical and resource issues. These are not specialist skills but taken together they make a distinctive skill set. It is critical that authorities embarking on youth engagement and volunteering schemes take on board what is involved in proper support to the young people.

‘Support’ does not happen automatically or by good fortune: it involves the provision of resources and skilled workers, operating over sustained periods. These workers are what one of the national stakeholders termed the ‘magic people’ (see Section 3.12.) and their commitment and skill should not be taken for granted. While the barriers can be daunting, it is important to remember that this study shows ample evidence of young people overcoming their difficulties and achieving well in volunteering with the support of their workers.

‘Yvette’ undertook a volunteer placement within the cafe of a local authority museum. While this benefited the museum in terms of additional capacity within the cafe, the greatest impact was on the young volunteer herself.

Prior to her placement, Yvette had been long term NEET for over 20 months. She had previously been excluded from school and attended a pupil referral unit for the last eighteen months of her education. One of the greatest barriers for her to volunteering was that she lived a very chaotic and transient life. She moved home three times during the placement and was often responsible for looking after her younger siblings at short notice. Issues arose at the commencement of her placement with regard to her hardship allowance being stopped because of the volunteering, though this was later resolved.

Yvette had to overcome a variety of issues to attend her placement and managed to do this with the support of the project team and the host department. Her commitment impressed the staff and they were exploring the possibilities of part-time work for her in the cafe.

Yvette feels her confidence has improved, as she had struggled with her communication skills in the past, and when she was not able to express herself clearly became very angry. *“My confidence being around others is growing. And I’m not embarrassed to ask things.”* This was supported by the fact that she felt trusted, as she had some previous offences that she disclosed to her supervisor. She was also pleased to be given an element of responsibility, for instance, in bringing in recipes that could be made in the coffee shop. She said she felt valued for who she is for the first time in her life and did not want to let people down. *“I have been very proud of what I have learnt.”*

Throughout the placement, her self-esteem and aspirations were being raised and she was taking steps to achieve her goals. With the support of the project worker, she assessed her own learning needs for the future and enrolled on a Basic English and Maths course to improve her literacy and numeracy. She has now secured a place at catering college and started the course. *“I wouldn’t have gone to get my maths and English if the project worker hadn’t sorted it.”*

Several factors were vital in contributing to this success: the extra support and encouragement from the project workers, particularly on personal issues outside the placement; the understanding of the host department and its willingness to adapt in the light of the needs; practical financial support in terms of travel expenses and uniform costs arranged in advance.

(Case study submitted by a Beacon project: permission for use is acknowledged with thanks.)

## **6.7 Suggestions on good practice from the young people**

In the group discussions young people were asked “What one piece of advice would you give to other young people who might consider volunteering or becoming involved in a similar project?” Young people often wrote their answers on post-it notes: a selection is provided below. Many of these comments were in a similar vein simply encouraging others to try it. The need for consistency showed up well together with the need to work as a team.

- *“Do things together to build up trust. Use games like dis/agree along a line on floor and debate. Argue and be nice. Debate without shouting and being horrible.”*
- *“Start a group – make sure young people are involved, having a say. If they’re going to run projects for young people, workers should train for this. Need to be very approachable and able to listen.”*
- *“Stress the need for consistency about attendance.”*
- *“If you’re going to go for it you need a lot of commitment. You have to be prepared and consistent.”*
- *“If you’re going to do it you need to attend the training. Keep going. Take advantage of what’s offered.”*
- *“Have a rave – teamwork.”*
- *“It’s a really good experience. The group is welcoming and you will not be left out. Come along and join in.”*
- *“If you didn’t want to go alone, take a friend.”*
- *“Treat others with respect and you’ll get respect back. It’s great to get involved.”*
- *“You will like it, you don’t know if you don’t do it.”*
- *“Don’t worry someone always there to help and listen.”*
- *“A lot of people in care think it’s their fault. They think they are bad. Be confident.”*
- *“To carry on challenging yourself. After a year you get a bit used to it.”*
- *“When they say you’re going to do this – it’s a bit daunting. Like delivering training to other young people. But I learned about myself. You have to challenge yourself. I thought that would be challenging. Adult support helped with plans and in the sessions.”*
- *“Get thrown in at the deep end, if there’s support. Just ask yourself bloody questions. And keep it all on your CV.”*

Young people came up with almost no suggestions for change in the schemes except minor issues like running in holiday time. They were also asked however for any tips they would give to Local Authorities or adults setting up such projects in the future and they offered a range of suggestions such as:

#### High level support

- *“Whoever thought this up ...it’s great ... this is having an impact because we’ve got high bosses backing us up. They’ve got to do something.”*

#### Reliable and effective communication systems

- *“Ensure you keep people up to date.”*
- *“Text reminders.”*
- *“Be organised. Don’t make arrangements and change them at the last minute.”*

#### Promotion

- [People] *“need to know what we’ve done - more publicity.”*
- *“Dispel initial negative perceptions and stereotypes.”*
- *“Use previous volunteers or staff to promote the opportunities.”*

- *“Use recruitment fairs, posters, leaflets, or videos.”*
- *“Use rewards.”*
- *“Department staff must be friendly.”*

#### Volunteering

- *“Create an outreach programme” [to recruit volunteers].*
- *“Have a specific volunteering coordinator, with well organised and varied placements.”*
- *“Don’t give volunteers just the boring jobs. They are not the same as work experience students.”*
- *“The experiences should be planned to take into account the volunteers’ interests.”*

#### A measure of control and influence for young people

- *“Young people need a voice so they feel they can make a difference.”*
- *“Ownership was where we are in charge – we were telling them what we wanted. It was our ideas...”*
- *“If we went to these meetings and it was like them just saying ‘we’re going to do this’, some of us wouldn’t be here.”*
- *“Implement ideas even if it won’t work.”*
- *“Make sure it’s always developing and moving on. We’re quite impatient.”*

#### Group work and teams

- *“Make sure they [young people] have fun.”*
- *“They need to be all one big group so they can talk, be friends and share their problems.”*
- *“Do activities together – teamwork.”*
- *“Get down with the kids and have fun.”*
- *“It’s the trust. To any other authority trying to do this work – trust is the thing.”*

#### Practical resources

- *“Transport is vital – parents feel young people are secure and will be back. We almost take it for granted now.”*
- [Rewards can/should be offered in kind.] *“Good thing we get it as credit, no cash, so not using it on crap.”*

#### Support from other adults

- *“Ask foster carers to get involved.”*
- *“In schools more teachers should work with young people at risk and not send them out to Pupil Referral Units.”*

These points from young people underline what was found to succeed in the programme by the workers and other observers. Key issues included the need to establish and maintain trust, good communication, giving young people a measure of genuine control, and ensuring that they have a valid role and recognition for it.

## Section 7: Evidence of impact on public services

### 7.1 Responses from workers and stakeholders

The questionnaires, interviews and Positive Incident Records show that adult respondents did feel that the Peer Support Programme had had a positive impact on their services. The returns on Positive Incidents asked the respondent to indicate where the benefit of the incident had been felt the most. As in Figure 7.1, this showed that out of the 47 reported incidents submitted, including those from the additional young parents' group. Most of these incidents were perceived to have impacted on the young people as individuals followed by the effect on local authority services. The least impact was seen with parents and the local community. More than one answer could be provided as impact might be felt in several places.

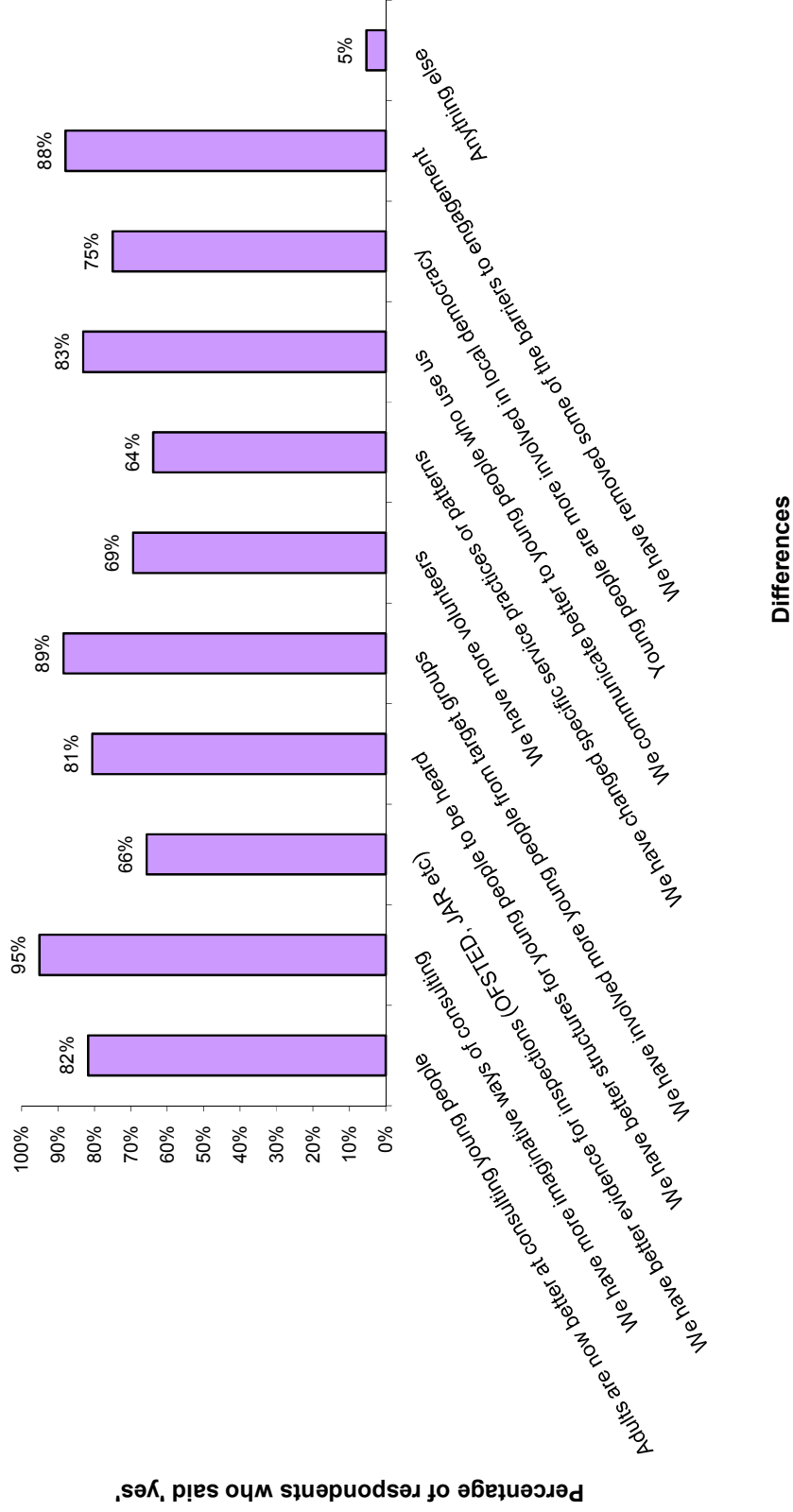
**Figure 7.1: Positive incidents – number of responses on where the impact was felt**

By the young people	By parents or carers	By the local community	In democratic or decision-making processes	By a partner organisation	In a local authority service
38	11	9	23	25	29

The questionnaires from the adults gave further information on how they perceived the benefits of the scheme to service delivery. These responses to options provided are shown in Figure 7.2 below. 76 adults responded showing that the greatest effect of the programme was felt in having more imaginative ways of consulting young people. They clearly felt it had succeeded in involving more young people from target groups, improving communication with young people, and removing some of the barriers to engagement. There is a more cautious response to the question of whether specific changes have been made in service patterns or practices. This is a slightly different pattern from the findings above from the Positive Incident Records but it could be expected that where the respondent saw something that happened as particularly positive, they would be more likely to have noted any positive improvement to services.



**Figure 7.2: Differences the scheme made to service delivery**



## 7.2 Evidence on youth involvement frameworks

The methodology for the study included an attempt to capture evidence on whether or not authorities had progressed during the programme on involvement framework criteria, such as those contained in Hear by Right (Wade et al, 2001). This proved more difficult than expected as the councils used several different schemes including the Young Devon 'Participation in Action' or a Children's Social Charter or tools devised internally as well as or instead of Hear by Right. Some were not familiar with Hear by Right; others had not found it helpful and some were unclear about their current position. It can only be said that some authorities had used involvement frameworks to good effect to measure their progress and to explain standards expected in the work with young people. For some senior managers embarking on youth involvement, the concepts of genuine participation were quite new. Some councils had embedded Hear by Right or some other framework in workers' plans. During the programme, some progressed on Hear by Right from the 'established' stage to the 'advanced' stage. Some had rolled out such 'toolkits' across a number of different local authority departments. What is significant in terms of assessing the impact of the Beacon peer support programme is that it had caused most authorities to question how genuinely they had involved young people and how they could make volunteering and engagement more than superficial.

## 7.3 Concrete examples of change

One of the biggest changes seen from the Beacon programme is therefore the effect on the mind-set of adult staff involved. This is a first step to improving services.

*"We've had six [Beacon] meetings ...and everything ... said at those meetings has been of value. Some of these were very simple things; for example, with young people you say to them 12-18 months and you think it is not a long way off but to them it's a large proportion of their lifetime. Little things like that are of real value. Young people can be bitterly disappointed when they don't hear from you. It's courtesy to acknowledge and keep them informed- keep them in the loop."*

*"The training session was excellent – all gained something. 30 people during the day...eight Members attended. The people who learned the most are the people from the District Council because a lot of it is alien to them. Officers at the District Council haven't come across it – this has been a new opportunity for them and instead of saying 'we value young people' they can think what this really means; how it takes nurturing and developing, how it influences the next generation."*

*"A month later we were asked to involve young people in every scrutiny. We were making recommendations about the town centre...and from now on we are asked to include young people. Previous attempts through the Youth Assembly were a rather meaningless tick box thing. This was an outcome of*

*the training. But there was no indication of how they would like it done...just that we had to do it!"*

*"It has been a wake-up call in terms of what consulting young people is all about...We are the people who organise elections and we have a position of democratic deficit in terms of young people understanding what local government is about. We are responsible for collecting the council tax and if we have increasing numbers of young people who grow up as young adults with little understanding of local government and what it provides they are less likely to pay it. Young people are users of services. We are re-vamping parks and play facilities and we have leisure centres. We need to know how they see these services and what they want from them."*

*"It has helped me; I am a bloke in a suit... My nervousness at the beginning about engaging with young people... I overcomplicated it maybe. I needed just to do it."*

There was also evidence of changes being made to service provision. Some of these changes were relatively minor but hugely symbolic in that young people's views had been taken into account for the first time. These examples included:

- An outdoor pursuits centre had improved its catering arrangements. Adults had previously sat at a 'top table' and 'had two sandwiches in their lunch packs' while young people only had one. There is now no top table and young people have two sandwiches. The instructors have taken comments on board and deal more informally with older young people. *"This is changing services as we speak. It's influencing organisational attitudes towards young people."* (Local worker.)
- Staff re-training in a leisure project had taken place after young people's feedback (despite the fact that it had just won a major award).
- Physical improvements were being made or investigated. In one centre there were moves to improve access with lifts and toilets for the disabled. In another venue, exposed wiring noted by young people on an inspection visit, had now been made safe.
- Changes to practice occurred in sexual health clinics such as improvements in demonstrations with condom distribution and discussion of different types and sizes; not having confidential files visible in the clinic; and seating arranged to increase privacy or sensitivity for those waiting for services.
- Improvements had taken place at Connexions centres such as better disability access, better display of opening hours, and making known facilities for private interview.
- Teachers had benefited from young people's input in delivering personal, health and social education (PSHE) and peer education offered a dynamic approach that interested pupils.
- Several services had young volunteers who had not only increased capacity to deliver but had also given important feedback on how the services were seen by the public, how to recruit young staff, and how to involve minority communities.

*"We did not have any young, under-18s, as volunteers here at all. Now we have two and are consulting them about some of our audience development work. The feedback from the young people helped our research and recommendations."*

*"Some young people come with enthusiasm and commitment and are like a breath of fresh air to your organisation."* (Staff members in local authority facilities.)

- Officers from a Technical Services Department attended a meeting with young people to consult about recycling, waste collection, littering and graffiti. They had prepared an informal interactive presentation and gave out gift bags to all the young people. There was a lively dialogue especially around the difficulties of recycling in multi-occupancy dwellings and the intended roll-out of recycling facilities in schools. As a result of the requests from young people, the officers agreed to investigate whether recycling services could be provided to youth clubs as well as schools and the young people undertook to facilitate a wider debate on recycling.
- Young people in one authority had engaged with the Youth Offending Service to improve reception and information. Volunteers were also using their experience as victims of knife crime to talk to young people who carry knives or who have been involved with at risk groups.
- Library staff in another area received training on using arts based consultation processes with young people. They attended a performance by young people raising perceptions of the service and the consequent dialogue enabled improvement of stock and service and the ways in which young people were treated. There was anecdotal evidence of increased library usage by young people.
- A special school for young people with complex needs became involved in one project. Initially there was a great deal of resistance from the teaching staff, who were somewhat over-protective and anxious about the problems involved in taking the young people out of school. They also appeared doubtful about their abilities and capacity to contribute. In the event, the young people did travel to other venues, managed to communicate and effectively assessed the provision for its accessibility. Now the young people are planning a fun day for local primary school children. They have designed flyers and will be leading activities such as crafts, football coaching, archery, and forest schools.
- Homeless young people and a group accommodated with a housing association gave presentations to a Council committee about the issues they faced around accommodation. Members agreed to follow up on these needs in the work on the housing strategy and requested attendance at future meetings of both senior housing officers and the young people. The minutes of these meetings show a careful 'trail' of follow up and feedback to the young people.

*"This Committee believes that the lack of access to housing amongst young people, together with the right level of support, is becoming critical and therefore an additional meeting of the Committee be held...in order to consider the issue of homelessness in more detail, to which appropriate officers of the Council and representatives of [local housing partnerships] should be invited."* (Committee minute.)

- In one authority, young people had become part of the assessment process during commissioning for the Children and Young People's directorate.
- In the same authority, young people had suggested that swimming pools should be free to children and young people in the holiday periods and that this would reduce youth nuisance. Elected Members had decided to implement the recommendation at a cost of £187,000 and had monitored the resulting falls in youth crime. At Ward level, another Member had also instigated meetings between young people and adults who were concerned over anti-social behaviour in a large municipal park.
- Changes also occurred not just for individuals but in the attitudes of groups of young people working for change. They became more able to moderate immediate demands and recognised the need to work for long term change. A group of looked after young people realised that some of the changes they were arguing for would not happen quickly enough to help them. They began to see that it would help those coming behind. This was their advice for other young people. They explained to the researcher that they were happy to see some changes happening like the move to set up payments of clothing allowances into their personal bank accounts, though that had already taken over six months in the pipeline.

*"You need serious discussion about not being able to do everything they want. It's about educating young people about how it works. We can't agree to everything. We can prioritise and explain. That will develop an understanding about governance, how councils operate and where money comes from."* (Senior officer.)

The Russell vision of young people contributing to local authority services as volunteers and engaging with them to improve services to the public was beginning to take shape in the Beacon partnership authorities. Staff were starting to see the dividends of consulting and involving young people. The benefits that can accrue to services are in line with findings from earlier research. More far reaching transformation of attitudes on the part of adult service providers towards their young 'customers' and, on the other hand, of young people towards public services is however only likely to be achieved through long-term sustained systems of involving young people.

## **Section 8: Implications for strategic approaches, resources and infrastructure**

We have seen in the previous section that youth volunteering and engagement can have real effects in improving delivery. If local authorities are serious about service improvement then the implications of the evidence need to be absorbed and acted upon.

The implications for local government of these findings are simply logical inferences from the evidence of what staff and young people have said and what was successful in practice. They can be analysed as consequences for allocation of resources, both internally and for external funding bodies; implications for planning and timetabling; and implications for staffing and infrastructure. Quotations below are drawn from the comments of adult respondents.

### **8.1 Resource allocation**

Funding for practical support should be built into budgets from the start. This is critical to enabling the most disadvantaged to overcome the blockages to their participation.

*“It encourages them to come back if they haven’t been out of pocket.”*  
*“Resourcing is a massive issue. If you want it to be successful you need it properly resourced. There’s no operational budget for meetings [here], or promotional resources – transport costs [in this county] are huge.”*

Salary allocations need to reflect the skills required and the staff ratios necessary to work safely and in sufficient depth. Adequate funds are also needed for recruitment and training, and for specialist input as appropriate. Publicity, events and presentations, and accreditation costs will also take up resources.

This research has continually stressed the longer term issues for resources. Matters such as inadequate disability access cannot be changed overnight nor usually without capital investment. Some access needs such as crèche support, signing or interpretation are normally revenue issues but they need systems setting up so that adequate provision is available when it is required. More generally volunteering and engagement are unlikely to become fully absorbed into the lifeblood of local government until they are part of mainstream resources.

*“[In this authority] we have a strategy group for each of the five ECM outcomes. The person who chairs ‘Positive Contribution’ is the Principal Youth Officer, with people from a whole host of different agencies around the table. The whole business of participation is high on the agenda with elected Members. The Youth Parliament last year had a 100% turnout. The lead Members for children and young people from each of the parties joins with us to make a reference group and the Chief Executive is supportive. We are looking at embedding the work in our structures... Things don’t work if it’s*

*down to one person... The big issue is this is a growing agenda. It's massive if you do it well."* (Second tier local authority officer.)

## **8.2 Planning and timetabling**

Adequate lead in time is needed. Project proposals are often unrealistic in the hope of attracting resources. Funding bodies also have a tendency to create schemes with unmanageable timelines.

It takes time to gain the support and buy-in of senior managers. Recruitment, training and briefing of staff need to take place. 'Marketing' the initiative will require further time to engage partners and young people and clarify expectations. In 'embedded' youth engagement and volunteering schemes, momentum builds over time but there are real dangers in 'quick win', superficial involvement initiatives which can prove counter-productive.

*"A lot of my time has been spent in embedding it in the local area and neighbourhood plans ... because the important thing is going around all department managers and teams and getting them to sign up to the agreement that we'll be treated seriously. That took me four months ... behind the scenes work making sure I got the Council to agree to totally support the project – getting the Service Level Agreement."* [Project leader.]

For many excluded groups, additional time will be needed to find means of contact, and work with partners to build confidence in the initiative. Examples include the work that Beacon authorities undertook to involve black and minority ethnic community groups; work with special schools to recruit young people with disabilities; and work with social workers and foster carers to involve looked after young people. For certain of these groups the process of gaining appropriate permissions and clearances can be extremely involved. Accreditation schemes may need to be specially created or adapted.

Some schemes start well but fail to plan for creating the feedback loop to young people and follow up by service managers. There is an important symbolism about feedback – it confirms to the young people involved that their views are taken seriously and to other young people that change can actually be achieved.

*"Also there's the issue of lack of response since the show – there's been no feedback for the young people. What's going to be done about it? Otherwise the young people will see it as tokenistic. Since then some are more wary about doing anything that's about their opinions, because they see it as tokenistic, this is the danger a lot of time with [these] projects."*

A work plan is needed which includes these steps and which can achieve the necessary spend within the timeframe. Once again supervision is needed by a senior member of staff who has an understanding of the issues and a will to resolve the snags which inevitably occur.

### 8.3 Staffing and infrastructure

Sufficient staffing is needed to give the young people the personal support they need, especially if more vulnerable or hard to reach young people are to be involved. The workers themselves need recognition and support.

*“This borough and others often hand pick motivated young people – it’s not really representation and they wheel the same young people out again and again. I didn’t want this to be the case. I wanted to involve young people from different backgrounds, so the group has several looked after young people, which has involved lots of issues and hard work, and several with disabilities...It is very expensive. It should have a co-worker. One day [a week] and on my own is not sufficient.”*

Continuity of staffing is ideal. If change is inevitable a clear handover and acceptance of responsibility for the engagement work must occur. If such initiatives are simply ‘tagged on’ to other responsibilities without proper time and recognition, it is likely that they will fail to deliver.

*“The project was late in starting, so it hasn’t even been going for a year – it’s just taking off really... so we need the on-going funding and support. With continued support and if properly valued, it could really change services.”*

A dedicated team of participation workers or volunteer coordinators can be helpful especially in developing a repository of skills to pass on to others who wish to consult or involve young people. There is however a considerable danger if such teams begin to be viewed as having responsibility for carrying youth engagement in an authority. To be effective youth involvement has to be corporately owned and manifested in delivery in every department. There is a need to embed the skills across professional groups and not to depend solely on dedicated participation staff.

*“Some of the difficulty thus far was that we set up the [Participation Team] and were recognised as doing well. People say, ‘That’s the [Participation] team’s responsibility.’ I get called by people who want me to supply young people. I think, ‘You work with these young people, why can’t you find them?’ The team has a high profile, but we aren’t embedding it in individual service managers’ heads to get it into their team - their responsibility. Breaking that cycle is where we are going next.”*

Appropriate staff training should be built into a programme of engagement. Staff in all services, not just those who are participation workers or youth workers, need to develop skills in informal approaches, understand the potential of a range of innovative methods, and learn to support young people who find volunteering or engagement daunting.

Reliability has been raised repeatedly by young people as a success factor. Their disappointments can arise from staff movements or short-term posts but senior staff also need to supervise their teams to stringent standards of dependability. Where young people are let down by poor practice, the effect



goes well beyond the individual into the wider question of the reputation of the project and the authority's commitment to youth engagement.

#### **8.4 Conclusions**

For local authorities and government departments wishing to promote youth volunteering and engagement shaping and improving in public services, our headline conclusions are set out below.

- Young people can and do contribute to the delivery and shaping of local authority services in many different and equally valid ways. The definition adopted in this research includes formal volunteering or service to others; mutual aid or self-help; participation, including involvement in political or decision-making processes on a voluntary basis; and advocacy or campaigning.
- Young people do not necessarily term all of these activities 'volunteering' but they do clearly see themselves as giving their own time and energy without pay in the service of others.
- The benefits gained by young people can be considerable. These are felt especially in confidence and self-esteem, and the acquisition of new skills for self-efficacy and for the labour market. The impact on young people of knowing they had 'made a positive contribution' to their own local area in some way was very marked.
- Whether volunteering in public services or engaging in participation schemes to influence and shape them, young people experience not only personal development but gain specific skills needed in the workplace such as team work, clear communication, listening well, taking an interest and being eager to learn, an ability to take criticism, solve problems, read, write and add up (UKCES, 2009).
- There was no evidence that it was too difficult or impossible to involve certain groups. The support of skilled workers is however essential to drawing in the most disadvantaged target groups and enabling them to derive maximum benefit from volunteering and engagement.
- The benefits to the public sector can also be substantial not only in assisting the delivery of services but in making them more responsive, as envisaged in the Russell report. Young people from under-represented groups can help in making services more accurately tailored to the needs of particular groups. The study also showed examples of concrete change achieved as a result of young people's involvement and influence.
- Schemes need to be adequately resourced in order to demonstrate these benefits to the full. Resources need to be awarded with an adequate timeframe from external funders. Internally allocations need to be made not only for practical requirements such as travel or staffing but long-term investment is also needed to improve all forms of access more generally.

The investment required is significant. If at all possible it needs to be mainstreamed.

- In order to achieve maximum value from that investment, schemes need to be sustained indefinitely and embedded in the culture of the local authority. Positive outcomes become cumulative when programmes are continued in the long-term.
- Long-term commitment to youth engagement on the part of an authority can help to diminish the frustration often felt by young people about how long it can take to achieve change. In a sustained scheme, young people may be able to see that they are part of a succession of effort to make things better for other young people and that they can hand the baton on to others when age, education or career make it necessary to move on.
- Young people need support from skilled and committed workers in order to overcome the barriers they face and realise the potential of engagement and volunteering. 'Support skills' are multi-faceted and it should not be taken for granted that all workers will have them: these skills need fostering, development and recognition. The report offers a breakdown of what real support involved in the eyes of young people.
- In accordance with the Russell Report, young people should not lose out financially by volunteering. Support should include practical resources especially the provision of transport or help with the expense of travelling to activities. Transport was the practical issue most raised by young people.
- Preparation, training of adults, culture change around expectations, and positive attitudes towards young people's participation take time to deliver and short, fixed-term programmes are less likely to get these foundations properly laid. Factors such as staff turnover, reorganisation, and the introduction of new policy initiatives mean that these efforts also have to be sustained.
- The support of elected Members and senior officers is vital. Champions are needed who see the value of youth volunteering and engagement and who will work to resolve the intractable problems at a high level.
- Ownership needs to be corporate and should not reside in one service or department alone. Barriers can often be resolved by working in partnership across services. The Youth Service and local authority 'participation officers' have real skills to contribute to this agenda but they cannot deliver and sustain all the consultation and engagement of young people that is needed across all the service areas. Other service areas and departments need to own youth engagement for themselves and develop the appropriate skills internally.
- It is important that local councils take on board that young people may find different routes to engagement and that varied methods or models are

needed for young people to find the method of expression that suits their needs and abilities. Where there is an attempt to channel all volunteering and engagement through one 'approved' structure (such as a youth parliament or young mayors), this is likely to prevent other young people finding a niche for themselves such as producing a film or youth newspaper, working for a particular interest group or volunteering in practical ways, such as improving the environment. Young people need to be able to take part on their own terms and their own issues. It is the variety of routes to engagement that needs to be corporately owned and acknowledged rather than a single quasi-democratic structure.

## APPENDIX A

### Summary of scheme achievements against the baseline at 2007

Each Beacon partnership drew up its own baselines against which to assess progress according to the nature of the projects. These measures were agreed with the research team by March 2008. A common format was devised using Mark Friedman's questions relating to judging performance and outcomes in public services: *How much did we do? How well did we do? Is anyone better off?* (The last question anticipates both qualitative and quantitative measures; for more detail see Friedman, 2005). The qualitative evidence on the gains for young people is not set out in detail here but has been incorporated in the body of the report.

<b>Derwentside, Sedgefield and Stockton</b> Overall target was to increase engagement or volunteering of BME and disabled young people.		
	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim and/or final measures</b>
<b>How much did the authorities do?</b>		
Young volunteers recruited to support process.	No of young people recruited for this process during <b>2006/7</b> Derwentside = 0 Sedgefield = 0 Stockton = 0	No of young people recruited during <b>2007/8</b> Derwentside = 6 ) Sedgefield = 8 ) all together = 20 Stockton = 6 ) In <b>2008/9</b> Derwentside = 17 ) Sedgefield = 13 ) all together = 44 Stockton = 14 )
No of young people trained	No of young people trained during <b>2006/7</b> Derwentside = 0 Sedgefield = 0 Stockton = 0	No of young people trained during <b>2007/8</b> Derwentside = 6 Sedgefield = 7 Stockton = 4 In <b>2008/9</b> Derwentside = 8 Sedgefield = 12 Stockton = 11

No of organisations contacted and subsequently involved (to encourage BME and disabled young people to participate).	No of services contacted and involved during <b>2006/7</b> Derwentside = 0 Sedgefield = 0 Stockton = 0	No of services contacted and subsequently involved during <b>2007/8 and 08/09</b> Derwentside = 6 - Villa Real, Youth Opportunity Fund, Connexions, V, Durham and Darlington Race Equality, ELLIE Youth Bus. Sedgefield = 12 - Sedgefield Leisure, V Involved, Durham County Council, CAVOS (Sedgefield CVS), Children North East, Shildon Children's Action Network, Shildon Town Council, Newton Aycliffe Air Cadets, Aycliffe Town Council, Durham Young Women's Brigade. Stockton = 6 - Stockton Borough Council (3 depts.), TRISTAR homes, Victoria House Project, The Children's Society, Stockton Youth Bus.
<b>How well did they do it?</b> Increased engagement or volunteering of BME and disabled young people.	No of new young people involved in engagement/volunteering from BME or disabled groups in <b>2006/7</b> . Derwentside = 0 Sedgefield = 0 Stockton = 0	No of new young people involved from BME and disabled groups during <b>2007/8</b> Derwentside = BME & disabled ) Sedgefield = BME & disabled ) overall 5. Stockton = BME & disabled ) In <b>2008/9</b> Derwentside = BME 0, disabled 15. Sedgefield = BME 6, disabled 1. Stockton = BME 2, disabled 2.
Means of accreditation created	No accreditation yet in place in <b>2006/7</b> .	Means of accreditation created during <b>2007/8</b> Derwentside registered as a centre for OCN (Open College Network). Young volunteers can gain OCN level 1 in volunteering. In <b>2008/9</b> continued use of OCN level 1 in volunteering. Course adapted to meet needs and ability of young people (disabled and BME).
New methods or structures tested	New methods or structures tested in Derwentside, Sedgefield and Stockton during 2006/7 = 0	Methods used in Derwentside, Sedgefield and Stockton during 2007/8 and 2008/9 : Training with young people, focus groups, community based projects, mystery shopping, games/activities,

		residential, reviews, development of documents and training, volunteering agreements, communication 'passports'.
<b>Is anyone better off? - Quantitative</b>		
No of young people awarded accreditation or qualifications	No of young people gaining accreditation or qualifications during <b>2006/7</b> Derwentside = 0 Sedgefield = 0 Stockton = 0	No of young people gaining accreditation or qualifications during <b>2007/8 and 2008/9</b> Derwentside = 8 Sedgefield = 12 Stockton = 11
<b>Is anyone better off? - Qualitative</b>		
Feedback from councillors, young people and beneficiary organisations.		Volunteer training programme evaluated with young people from all three authorities in February 2009. Comments from young people and Positive Impact records included in this report.

<b>Gateshead, South Tyneside and Durham County</b>		
Overall target was improved services & increased involvement of young people who are NEET, minority ethnic groups, & looked after young people.		
	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim and/or final measures</b>
<b>How much did the authorities do?</b>		
No of young people involved as volunteer inspectors	No of young people involved during <b>2006/7</b> : Connexions + Sexual Health Gateshead – 6 S. Tyneside – 6 Durham – 0 Sexual Health – 6	No of young people involved during <b>2007/8 and 2008/9</b> in Gateshead, S. Tyneside & Durham: Gateshead – 10 S. Tyneside – 12 (2 in reserve but taking part) Durham – 12
No of young people trained	No of young people trained during <b>2006/7</b> : Connexions Gateshead – 6 S. Tyneside – 6 Durham – 0 Sexual Health Services - 6	No of young people trained during <b>2007/8 and 2008/9</b> : Gateshead – 10 S. Tyneside – 12 Durham – 12

No of services inspected	<p>No of services inspected during <b>2006/7</b>:</p> <p>Connexions: 1 service – Connexions Tyne and Wear 8 services – Connexions Centres across Tyne &amp; Wear (4 visits each to Gateshead and S. Tyneside - 36)</p> <p>Sexual Health Whole of Sexual Health Service – 8 clinics</p>	<p>No of services inspected during <b>2007/8</b> and <b>2008/9</b>:</p> <p>Gateshead, S. Tyneside and Durham did one joint inspection. (Thurston Outdoor Education Centre) as a pilot. South Tyneside inspected The Cave Music Centre, Simonside Sports Centre, Phab Club (centre for young people with disabilities), Ocean Road CA, libraries (planned Feb 09). Gateshead inspected 5 youth &amp; community centres including Lyndhurst Centre, Lobley Hill Community Centre, Kibblesworth, Route 26 and Whitehouse Lane. The group also carried out mystery shopping phone calls to an additional 5 centres. Durham inspected 12 leisure centres across the county (mystery shopping) and reports were submitted to the senior leisure officers.</p>
<p><b>How well did they do it?</b></p> <p>Target groups reached: Young people who are NEET Minority ethnic groups Looked after young people</p>	<p>Nos involved as volunteers from these groups during <b>2006/7</b>:</p> <p>Connexions - Gateshead only 3 pre 16 not attending education (alternative education) 1 post 16 in Entry to Employment 2 post 16 wheel chair users – both in FE</p> <p>Sexual Health 4 young people from lesbian, gay and bisexual community</p>	<p>Nos involved as volunteers from these groups during <b>2007/8</b> and <b>2008/9</b>:</p> <p>Gateshead – 1 NEET Young person + 3 looked after young people Durham – 2 NEET young people South Tyneside – 1 young person with physical disabilities, 3 with special needs, 1 young carer and 1 looked after young person</p>
Methods of evaluation used	<p>Methods used during <b>2006/7</b>:</p> <p>Connexions Sites visited were evaluated against a set of 31 agreed criteria Results compared to identical earlier exercise Report and recommendations produced.</p>	<p>Methods used during <b>2007/8</b> and <b>2008/9</b>:</p> <p>Pilot carried out on Thurston Activity Centre with use of Hear By Right standards. Young People took part in an outdoor activity residential experience, and undertook a mock inspection of the quality of provision on offer to young people. The report was forwarded to the Centre Manager.</p>

	Sexual Health – Group created own set of guidelines for evaluating the services	<p>The format used formed the basis of the 7S model of Management – Hear By Right format and has since led on to completion of the 'What's Changed?' toolkit – identifying the fact young people have been listened to and their views acted upon. Effective and relevant change has therefore taken place. Subsequent inspections involved individual teams from the 3 authorities undertaking inspections in their own areas (mystery shopping).</p> <p>In Durham and Gateshead the group designed, developed and tested their own criteria and recording sheets/methods.</p> <p>Hear by Right 7S model is still being used by South Tyneside for assessing services. Also developed own certificates and planning a celebration evening to acknowledge progress made.</p>
Means of accreditation created	<p><b>2006/7:</b> Connexions - Locally produced certification – not formally accredited. Sexual Health – none.</p>	<p><b>2007/8 and 2008/9:</b> Established accreditation routes in place: ASDAN – (Gateshead + Durham) Duke of Edinburgh's Award (South Tyneside) Link with Young Devon pilot (although not accredited yet).</p>
Toolkit created	<p><b>2006/7:</b> None specifically in Connexions – or Sexual Health work.</p>	<p><b>2007/8 and 2008/9:</b> The Durham team is planning to develop a training resource/toolkit, which will be delivered by young people as peer trainers.</p>
<b>Is anyone better off? - Quantitative</b>		
Number of young people gaining accreditation	<p>No of young people gaining accreditation in</p> <p><b>2006/7:</b> Connexions - N/A – see above. Sexual Health – None.</p>	<p>No of young people accredited in <b>2007/8 &amp; 2008/9:</b> Gateshead – 10 young people (ASDAN), portfolios currently awaiting moderation. S. Tyneside – 10 young people have completed Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Durham – It is expected that 10 young people will gain</p>



Proportion of services inspected reporting specific positive changes	Proportion of services inspected reporting specific positive changes in <b>2006/7</b> . Each Connexions Local Manager (including those at Gateshead and South Tyneside) was presented with a clear action plan following the 29 visits. Compared to the identical mystery shopping exercise carried out in October/November 2006, whole-service performance had improved in 23 questions. Performance in 3 questions had remained the same and 3 recorded a decline. Written recommendations have been prepared by the young people to support remedial actions.  Sexual health – all 8 services have made changes based on the feedback from the inspection.	accreditation through “Young Devon”. This will be complemented with the Youth Achievement Award (at silver level).
	Proportion of services inspected reporting specific positive changes in <b>2007/8 &amp; 2008/9</b> All services inspected have welcomed feedback from young people. Some changes have already been made and further discussion is taking place on action plans.  A number of changes have been implemented as a result. – e.g. new evaluation form, staff training and development, changes to catering arrangements.  Gateshead – examples include making centres more young people friendly with relevant posters and leaflets and more staff completing sexual health training and becoming C-Card trained so young people have better access to information and contraceptives.  South Tyneside – Check It Out project – SLA developed with the council and with the positive activities manager who will respond to reports within 2 weeks of receipt. Centres have made changes to the look of the buildings, staff have received in house training and new programmes have been developed to meet young people’s needs. The team visits centres 2 months after their initial visit to monitor progress.	
<b>Is anyone better off? - Qualitative</b>		
Evidence from young people of benefits of being involved	<b>2006/7:</b> Connexions - Young people recorded feedback via two processes; a formal evaluation exercise conducted by a consultant and a plenary meeting with all ‘mystery shoppers’ to relay verbal comments.	<b>2007/8 and 2008/9</b> Feedback from young people illustrates that the project has  Helped young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gain new skills and confidence.</li> <li>• Empowerment – to make a difference</li> <li>• Wider social circles/interaction</li> </ul>

	<p>Benefits (personal development) included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased self-confidence</li> <li>- Empowerment – feeling able to influence</li> <li>- Social interaction with peers from across region</li> </ul> <p>Other benefits included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vouchers</li> <li>- Memory Stick</li> <li>- Certificate</li> </ul> <p>Sexual Health – Young people feeling that their opinion is valued because they have seen tangible changes and better treatment of young people in the clinics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement</li> <li>• Opportunity to volunteer/participate and begin to make decisions</li> </ul> <p>Wider benefits from active involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people's voice and influence is leading to significant changes for them and the wider community.</li> <li>• Services will be more effective, better targeted, and better value for money.</li> <li>• The health of our democratic community depends on the active involvement of young people.</li> <li>• The involvement of young people is key to gaining funding and sustaining developments.</li> </ul> <p>Gateshead has just been successful in a bid to run the "V" Talent Year, which is about full time volunteering placements in children's services. Volunteers will receive NVQ level 2 and access to a personal development grant for education or training. At least 1 young person from the "Check it Out" team will participate.</p> <p>Individual case studies and Positive Incidents submitted.</p>
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<b>Lancashire, Burnley and Pendle</b> Main aim was to increase involvement of young people in public services by using trained peer life coaches or mentors.		
	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim and/or final measures</b>
<b>How much did the authorities do?</b>		
No of new young people involved as volunteers (target 36 beneficiaries)	No of young people involved during <b>2006/7</b> : Lancashire = 0 Burnley = 0 Pendle = 0	No of new young people involved during <b>2007/8</b> : Lancashire, Burnley and Pendle - overall 25 young people interested; 3 had started placement, 6 were agreeing placement details with host agency.  In <b>2008/9</b> , 76 expressed interest, 29 were signed up and 19 attended placements. Lancashire = 12 attended placement.

No of young people involved as peer mentors to the new volunteers.	No of young people involved during <b>2006/7</b> Lancashire = 0 Burnley = 0 Pendle = 0	Burnley = 5 attended placement. Pendle = 2 attended placement.
No of organisations receiving volunteer placements.	No of organisations receiving placements involved during <b>2006/7</b> Lancashire = 0 Burnley = 0 Pendle = 0	No of young people involved during <b>2007/8</b> First cohort of mentors recruited and commenced OCN Level 2 in Feb 08. In <b>2008/9</b> , mentoring reduced owing to delays in implementation and need to place volunteers.  Altogether 26 local authority departments were contacted and 18 were able to offer placements. No of organisations receiving placements during <b>2007/8</b> Lancashire = 6 (County Council placements in Burnley/Pendle) Burnley = 6 Pendle = 3 In <b>2008/9</b> Lancashire = 8 Burnley = 4 Pendle = 2
<b>How well did they do it?</b>		
No of new young people involved in volunteering from target groups: NEET Asylum seekers BME groups Young people looked after Travellers. Young carers	No of young people involved in engagement/volunteering from BME or disabled groups in <b>2006/7</b> Lancashire = 0 Burnley = 0 Pendle = 0	No of new young people involved as volunteers from target groups during <b>2007/8</b> is not known. By <b>2008/9</b> over the whole project in all three authorities, the volunteers included BME = 14 NEET = 11 Leaving care = 1 Young parents = 2
Means of accreditation created	No accreditation in place in <b>2006/7</b> .	In <b>2007/8 and 2008/9</b> : OCN Level 2 in mentoring in place for Peer Mentors. Volunteers also accredited via AQA Awards with units in Personal Action Planning; Reflecting on Volunteering Experience in the Public Sector; & Taking Part in a Public Sector Work Placement.

<b>Is anyone better off? - Quantitative</b>		
Numbers gaining the accreditation for Peer Mentors and for volunteers.	N/A	In <b>2007/8</b> , 6 young people had started OCN training in Lancashire, 0 in Burnley and 2 in Pendle. <b>2008/9</b> : Over all three authorities, 7 completed OCN Level 2 Mentoring; 11 completed AQA Personal Action Planning; 16 completed Taking Part in a Public Sector Work Placement; 15 completed Reflecting on Volunteer Experience.
Feasibility of a Youth Volunteering Bureau tested. Report submitted.	N/A	Final Research Report submitted September 08. Recommended high profile sustained future volunteering initiatives with a local authority champion. Role of impartial third party to support volunteers seen as helpful but would require additional resources.
<b>Is anyone better off? - Qualitative</b>		
Positive aspects of volunteering identified by the young volunteers. Feedback from organisations receiving volunteer placements. Feedback from peer mentors on benefits to themselves and to the volunteers.		Feedback from young volunteers received in internal and external evaluation. Case studies also provided. Some 8 out of 11 departments completing questionnaires indicated that they had benefited 'a lot' from having a volunteer and various benefits were identified. Due to delays in implementation and other issues, mentoring did not work as well as anticipated and took less of a priority than placing volunteers.

<b>Lewisham, Southwark and Medway</b>		
Original target was shaping "Young Managers" to form Management Board for Youth & Playground Service in Lewisham to include young people in planning and evaluating services.		
	Baseline	Interim and/or final measures
Staffing and joint work	<b>2006/7</b> : 2.5 days p.w. post to be created to support the Beacon Programme	<b>2007/8 and 2008/9</b> : Seconded project manager originally from Crime Concern became the operational lead to develop the Board of Young Managers. A full time participation youth worker was then appointed and a

		<p>dilapidated Youth Centre refurbished as the Youth Services Participation Hub. The borough wide staff were brought together to form the Engagement &amp; Participation Team and this has provided the capacity to support engagement projects. The work with the recipient boroughs has been the most difficult element of the programme. Early links to Bromley were lost and agreement was reached to work with Southwark. Major staff changes prevented further progress. Work with Medway has consisted of two visits and young people attending the second Lewisham assembly. The focus is on engaging more BME young people in participation [particularly the Youth Opportunity Programme]. A joint week of activity in Medway is planned [with accredited training in participation], with a wish to continue partnership beyond the Beacon Programme.</p>
<p><b>How much did the authorities do?</b></p> <p>No of new young people involved in decision-making</p>	<p><b>2006/7:</b> 18 young people were already involved in decision-making in the Lewisham youth service as Young Commissioners – no joined up with other young decision makers or youth-led work.</p>	<p>9 young people are still active as 'young commissioners' but are now joined [through this Beacon programme] with the 'young managers'.</p> <p>4 young people are involved in initiative with YOT re service improvement.</p> <p>Changes in the Youth Opportunity Programme, made at senior officer level [and ratified by the Mayor] have removed responsibility for the programme from the young commissioners. Long term this also removed the opportunity for young people to decide whether to continue the young manager programme. An opportunity to commission the new Positive Activities funding [PAYP/Summer] has been rejected by the young managers based on this experience.</p> <p>10 of the 16 young people elected onto the programme were not previously engaged in decision-making.</p>
<p>No of young people attending consultations/briefings on engagement</p>	<p><b>2006/7:</b> The Young Mayors Project is consulted on local strategic and national issues. Connexions PAYP group had 6 young people</p>	<p>4 different groups of young people attended deliberative events around Positive Activities in <b>2007/08</b>. The Young Managers Board has introduced the concept of partnership work to groups of young people and adult supporters.</p>

	involved as their Shadow Board. There was no youth engagement in the Youth Offending Service and no service wide group for the Youth Service. LACYP had an open forum and young people edit an on-line magazine	<p>30 young people were involved in electing their representatives as the first young managers on 26.4.08 and 16 young people were elected. 4 additional young people attended the first meeting of the YOS users' forum.</p> <p>13 young people are involved as Young Managers specifically representing YOS users, the Connexions Service, LACYP, the voluntary sector, the faith community, and young people with additional needs.</p> <p>Of the original 16, three have now left the programme.</p> <p>General consultation is normally carried out by the Youth Mayors; the Young Managers attended two specific consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the Drug Action Team about the kind of drug services needed for young people in Lewisham;</li> <li>• With Matrix on behalf of the Youth Justice Board re improving engagement with young people.</li> </ul> <p>The elected forum of young people who were involved in accreditation planned to link with the YMB. The group would be responsible for the distribution of funds to support accredited learning particularly in the DoE award. However the incentive for the group to carry on has ceased with the removal of this function from the Young Commissioners. Support to groups wishing to undertake DoE is now mostly available by phone or on line.</p>
No of meetings of new Young Managers' Board (or similar in other boroughs) and no of young people involved	<p><b>2006/7:</b> There have been two initial meetings of the Young Managers Board. Young people have been through Mentoring Training [4 evening sessions].</p>	<p><b>2007/8 and 2008/9:</b> 16 young people attended the 'Investing in Yourself' programme which resulted in 16 recorded outcomes and likewise for the Crimestoppers workshops with 16 recorded outcomes. Following the training in August, the YMB has met fortnightly at the Oakridge Participation Centre – around 11 sessions. 10 young people are involved from Medway. In September 2008, the YMB attended an away day to develop relationships through fun activities Groups of young people from the YMB are also involved in individual projects as described below.</p>

No of presentations/seminars for senior and strategic managers to develop support for youth engagement		<p><b>2007/8 and 2008/9:</b> A Beacon Participation Seminar for Senior Officers in Feb 2008 included Head of Policy, Assistant Director CYP, Heads of Services and others, using the 'Ladder of Participation' model. In March 2008, a Beacon Seminar took place at Lewisham Hospital with representatives from Connexions, YOS, Youth Services and LACYP.</p> <p>There have been two Assemblies since the launch at St Dunstan's College, in July 08 and in Jan 09. The Assemblies provided an opportunity for the YMB to table their ideas and inform Service Managers and others about the progress of projects. The first focussed on knife and other violent crime and LACYP also gave a presentation asking for support for a club night for young people leaving care. The second focussed on the projects and included Medway young people. The final will present the Lewisham DVD/toolkit and bring the Beacon programme to a close, emphasising those projects continuing within the different services.</p> <p>Debates on future engagement structures are continuing.</p>
<b>How well did they do it?</b>		
No of new young people involved in active citizenship from target groups: BME groups Looked after children & young people. Young people at risk. Means of accreditation created	<p>.</p> <p>Young Commissioners were all trained in the essentials of work with young people and grant giving [both accredited].</p>	<p>The Young Managers Board – all are volunteers with 9 BME [4 white], 1 LAC and 5 at risk through additional needs or involvement in youth crime. Three young people with special needs were engaged in the YMB and have been active Peer Inspectors.</p> <p>Two young people who had been on referral orders took part in a staff recruitment process at the Silwood Centre.</p> <p>Accreditation for Young Managers was developed using OCN.</p>
<b>Is anyone better off? - Quantitative</b>		
Accreditation achieved		<p><b>2007/8 and 2008/9:</b> Of the original 16 Young Managers, 10 completed the course and</p>

		received OCN accreditation in The Essentials of Participation Work with Young People [Youth Force]. The Medway group will also undertake this training with some of the Young Managers and together consider approaches to engaging BME young people The YMB agreed to fund the gay, lesbian, transsexual, and transgendered group & these young people will also have an opportunity to attend the accredited participation course
<b><i>Is anyone better off? - Qualitative</i></b>		
Evidence of benefit to young people involved. Evidence of results of Management Board decisions		<p>More than 50 individual young people received recorded outcomes for their individual participation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a young woman whose confidence and the ability to speak to an audience developed leading to her standing as candidate to be a young mayor;</li> <li>- young people involved in staff selection processes and/or designed or on-line survey relating to service improvement;</li> <li>- young man [from YOS] who made new friends [not involved in crime] and reduced his anti-social behaviour;</li> <li>- young people who attended the assemblies, or a Select Committee at Lewisham, to put questions to the Heads of Service and Councillors;</li> <li>- young people who were involved in the Summer Alive peer inspection programme.</li> </ul> <p>Further recorded outcomes for developing the new website and Accreditation in Journalism will be awarded during the additional project in February / March 2009.</p>
.		<p>Young Managers are finalising their Personal Development Plans – which help to demonstrate their distance travelled</p> <p>The Young Managers considered YOF applications for this year [only] for non-priority wards. They were also awarded funding to support some projects they wanted to develop.</p> <p>The Projects demonstrate the notion of participation through from</p>



		<p>decision-making to action, including:</p> <p>A schools DVD Project in partnership with the MPS. Eight young managers are involved in the production of the DVD which aims to reduce violent crime amongst young people. Young people are attending workshops run for the MPS</p> <p>GEMS [learning needs group]. Two young people are leading on this as managers and working with the Group and a youth worker has been identified to support them.</p> <p>Designing the new Connexions One Stop Shop.</p> <p>Working with an artist to improving the reception and interview rooms at the YOS.</p> <p>Working with the YOS to improve responses to young people at risk of involvement in violent crime / carrying a weapon. The planned Lewisham legacy product is a DVD and mini toolkit linked up to the development of a young people's website. All the young managers will be involved.</p> <p>The Peer Inspectors programme is focussed at present on how inclusive youth centres and clubs are – in terms of disability.</p> <p>Attending the Lewisham Police Forum.</p> <p>Promoting Positive Activities – young people's website.</p> <p>Over the next few sessions, the YMB will also consider options for the future, including potentially becoming a voluntary project in their own right.</p>
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<b>Bassetlaw with Norfolk</b>		
Main aim is to improve engagement with children & young people through both existing and new methods, especially looking at ways of enabling young people to become scrutineers of services.		
	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim and/or final measures</b>
<b>How much did the authority do?</b>		
No of existing groups identified and consulted where such groups could be used to	Baseline position at the start in <b>2006/7</b> is taken throughout as nil, since no engagement work had previously taken place in the District to	No of groups consulted by <b>2008/9</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video conference link with a primary school in Local Democracy Week.</li> </ul>

engage young people e.g. Connexions Service or Sports Development groups.	any extent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Pilot consultation undertaken with young people in a Leisure Centre.</li> <li>o Planning group for 'Plugged' event established with young people and Elected Members.</li> </ul>
Training, consultation with Norfolk to assess potential engagement mechanisms such as scrutiny, participatory budgeting, peer inspection, electronic methods, young advisors.		<p>No of officers and workers engaged in training or consultation meetings during <b>2008/9</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 6 consultation meetings held by Norfolk &amp; Bassetlaw inc representatives from District &amp; County Councils plus voluntary sector: active partnership group approx 12 attending over 9 month period.</li> <li>o 2 Training events for District Council staff including Elected Members and voluntary sector. 40 people attended including 8 councillors.</li> <li>o District Council lead officer reports quarterly to Cabinet re children and young people's issues.</li> </ul>
<b>How well did they do it?</b>		
Initiatives identified to move forward with young people's engagement.		<p>Initiatives implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Elected Members are supporting young people's issues on the agenda and wanting to see that.</li> <li>o Elected Members ask that young people be involved in every scrutiny.</li> <li>o 'Plugged' event planned for 300-1000 young people in March 09.</li> <li>o Youth Advisers to be recruited Jan – March 09.</li> <li>o Re-vamped Youth Assembly planned for 09; County Council and District Council staff working together; possibility of Beacon- funded p/t post.</li> </ul>
No of young people involved in early consultations or initiatives.		<p>Number of young people getting involved in developments in <b>2008/9</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 4 young people involved in planning group for 'Plugged' event</li> <li>o 6 applications received for Young Advisers role.</li> </ul>

<b>Is anyone better off? - Quantitative</b>		
Comments or evaluation reports from adult training.		N/A
<b>Is anyone better off? - Qualitative</b>		
Positive aspects of engagement identified by Council Officers or Members. Feedback from organisations consulted. Feedback from young people involved in early developments.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Council Officers report increased motivation to involve young people and increased awareness of ways to achieve this.</li> <li>○ Council Officers report increased internal and external links. The Beacon Project acted as a catalyst to boost partnership working which will continue.</li> <li>○ Voluntary sector representative notes that there is increased awareness of what each partner is doing.</li> <li>○ All reports increased understanding of the significance of the work in terms of ends and means; what it means to genuinely involve young people in services.</li> <li>○ All highlight and appreciate their increased understanding, its realism and practicality.</li> <li>○ County and District Officers working more effectively and more collaboratively.</li> <li>○ Young people contributed DMU questionnaires.</li> <li>○ Lead officer considers it a sustainable project now embedded in the work of the council.</li> </ul>

<b>Wakefield, NE Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire CC</b>		
Focus on creative arts work as a participation method. Original Beacon work was in Wakefield. The Peer Support Programme sought to introduce the methods to NE Lincolnshire and N Yorkshire.		
<b>Baseline</b>		<b>Interim and/or final measures</b>
<b>How much did the authorities do?</b>		
No of new young people involved in designing and performing at theme events.	No of young people involved during <b>2006/7</b> Wakefield = not known. NE Lincolnshire = 0 North Yorkshire = 0	No of new young people involved during <b>2007/8</b> : NE Lincolnshire = 16 (Nov 07) North Yorkshire = 0 In <b>2008/9</b> :

		NE Lincolnshire = 26 North Yorkshire = 12
No of people in audiences at the theme performances/events	No of people in audiences during <b>2006/7</b> Wakefield = not known. NE Lincolnshire = 0 North Yorkshire = 0	Numbers in audiences involved during <b>2007/8</b> NE Lincolnshire = 100 North Yorkshire = 0 In <b>2008/9</b> : NE Lincolnshire = 28 North Yorkshire = 51
No of workers trained in creative consultation methods.	No of workers trained during <b>2006/7</b> NE Lincolnshire = 0 North Yorkshire = 0	No of workers trained during <b>2007/8</b> NE Lincolnshire = 0 North Yorkshire = 12 In <b>2008/9</b> : NE Lincolnshire = 16 North Yorkshire = 12
No of artists trained	No of artists trained during <b>2006/7</b> NE Lincolnshire = 0 North Yorkshire = 0	No of artists trained during <b>2008/9</b> Wakefield = 0 NE Lincolnshire = 0 North Yorkshire = 14
<b>How well did they do it?</b>		
No measures used.		
<b>Is anyone better off?</b>		
No quantitative measures were used, nor accreditation. Qualitative evidence was gathered from young people and Positive Incident records were submitted.		The young people who participated all reported that they enjoyed the experience. In both authorities parents fed back that their children demonstrated increased confidence. As a result of their participation NE Lincs: 4 young people became part of other forums. In N Yorkshire, 2 young people went on to volunteer with the library service. 2 young people also became involved in developing a funding application for a My Space funding bid. Library staff report improvements to service.

<b>West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, East Sussex</b> Project focus has been on involving looked after young people.		
	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim and/or final measures</b>
<b>How much did the authorities do?</b>		
No of consultation/training events specifically for or involving looked after young people.	No of consultation/training events involving LAC young people in <b>2006/7</b> West Sussex = Considerable number of consultation events throughout the County, some of which involved LAC. East Sussex = regular contact with small group. Brighton & Hove = regular contact with small group.	No of consultation/training events involving LAC young people involved during <b>2007/8</b> West Sussex: 1 at Chichester, Jan 08 (25 young people) East Sussex: 4 x planning meetings in 07/08 Brighton and Hove: 4 x planning meetings in 07/08  In <b>2008/9</b> : West Sussex: Joint consultation planned for March 09 with partner authorities 1 x Film premier event/consultation in March 09 East Sussex: 3 planning workshops with Film Project group (West Lightning) in Autumn 08. 1 x Film shoot over 3 days. 1 x consultation event with Film Group, Children in Care Council representatives, PAR plus Foster Carers in December 08. 4 meetings between LAC and Social Worker Managers 1 x Film premier event/consultation in March 09 Brighton & Hove: Not known.
Number of sessions/meetings between LAC young people and adults as 'corporate parents'.	No of sessions/meetings between LAC young people and adults in <b>2006/7</b> West Sussex = 16 East Sussex = regular meetings with ESCC participation worker. Brighton & Hove = regular meetings with B & H participation worker.	No of sessions/meetings between LAC young people and adults during <b>2007/8</b> West Sussex = 1 in March 08 (with 10 councillors and also senior officers County Wide) 6 locally with social services and 10 locally with Voluntary Sector. PAR consultation meetings = 24. West Lightning consultation meetings = 24. Post 16s group = 24. East Sussex = 6 Brighton & Hove = 10

		<p>In <b>2008/9</b> West Sussex = 1 County-wide to happen in March. 8 locally with Social Services. 10 locally with voluntary organisations. East Sussex = 8 Brighton &amp; Hove = 20</p>
Number of newsletters or reports on good practice disseminated	<p>No of newsletters or reports on good practice in <b>2006/7</b> West Sussex = "Rant and Rave" magazine via PAR. East Sussex = 0 Brighton &amp; Hove = leaflets.</p>	<p>No of newsletters or reports on good practice disseminated during <b>2007/8</b> West Sussex = edited video from video booth at Children in Care Council. 2 newsletters. Regular issues of "Rant and Rave". East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove: not known. In <b>2008/9</b> West Sussex = 1 Report. 2 newsletters and one planned for release in March 09. East Sussex and Brighton and Hove: contributing to newsletter 2.</p>
<b>How well did they do it?</b>		
Number of new looked after young people involved and engaged in participation activities/structures.	<p>No of new LAC young people involved during <b>2006/7</b> West Sussex = participation scattered throughout County. East Sussex = not known. Brighton &amp; Hove = not known.</p>	<p>No of new LAC young people involved during <b>2007/8</b> West Sussex = 50. 2 peer mentoring schemes delivered – 1 by PAR and 1 by LA. West Lightning film project = 8 young people. Brighton College = 2 LAC people, doing radio interviews. 20 involved in CICC activity. West Sussex Youth Cabinet – 2 LAC co-opted as members. East Sussex = 15 Brighton &amp; Hove = 10 In <b>2008/9</b> West Sussex = 75 West Sussex Youth Cabinet = 1 elected Youth MP, 4 elected Youth Cabinet Members and 5 Members of West Sussex Youth Parliament. East Sussex = 25 Brighton &amp; Hove = 10</p>

Number of new LAC peer mentors involved to support other LAC young people.	No of new LAC peer mentors involved during <b>2006/7</b> West Sussex = 6 via PAR. East Sussex = not known. Brighton & Hove = not known.	No of new peer mentors involved during <b>2007/8</b> West Sussex = 5, ongoing East Sussex = 0 Brighton & Hove = Not known. In <b>2008/9</b> West Sussex = Further 5 awaiting CRB checks but engaged East Sussex = 23 Brighton & Hove = Not known.
Means of accreditation created		Accreditation created (and participant numbers) in <b>2007/8</b> West Sussex = Youth achievement awards. Hear By Right. 8 working towards. East Sussex: 15 in First Aid Brighton & Hove = Not known. In <b>2008/9</b> West Sussex = 6 East Sussex = 2 HBR. 13 Keystone (Silver), 7 'v'. Brighton & Hove = Youth Achievement. OCN.
<b>Is anyone better off? - Quantitative</b>		
Number of LAC young people gaining accreditation, qualifications from the process.	No of LAC young people gaining accreditation/qualifications during <b>2006/7</b> West Sussex = No known. East Sussex = 0 Brighton & Hove = 0	No of LAC young people gaining accreditation/qualifications during <b>2007/8</b> West Sussex = 0 – Working towards East Sussex = 2 HBR, 13 Keystone (silver) 7 V. 5 First aid Brighton & Hove = Not known. In <b>2008/9</b> West Sussex = 5 should gain Youth Achievement Award by June. Starting to look at accreditation with LAC involved with Social Services including independent living skills through OCN East Sussex = Not known. Brighton & Hove = Not known.
<b>Is anyone better off? - Qualitative</b>		
Feedback from LAC young people on benefits to them of involvement.		Feedback from young people in Positive Impact Forms, and radio interviews etc. Press releases, e.g. Youth Cabinet elections.

Feedback from adults on increased awareness or action taken.		<p>Joint surgeries between local Member of Parliament and a looked after young person, as West Sussex Member of UK Youth Parliament.</p> <p>Change of structure, and criteria/budgets for YOF to ensure LAC access.</p> <p>Newly agreed trainee participation post plus involving LAC participation worker for 8-13.</p>
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<b>Wirral, Liverpool and Knowsley</b> The main target was to involve young people in governance and strategic decision making, including the creation of appropriate mechanisms for looked after young people.		
	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim and/or final measures</b>
<b>How much did the authorities do?</b> New strategic groups/mechanisms established involving young people.	<p>All three authorities had well developed mechanisms already in place in <b>2006/7</b>. Wirral intended to establish an Executive Youth Board (EYP) to draw together existing youth bodies/forums. No members at March 07.</p> <p>Knowsley wanted to increase involvement in Knowsley Children and Young People's Forum (KCYP) (with 25 young people involved at March 07) and to establish a Children in Care Council (KCICC) to increase participation of LAC.</p> <p>Liverpool aimed to increase representation in the ten neighbourhood Youth Advisory Groups particularly of LAC and to create a dedicated YAG for this group. Liverpool Youth Council aims to elect 30 members in total.</p>	<p>New mechanisms established during <b>2007/8</b>:</p> <p><b>Wirral:</b> Concept of EYB presented to Youth Parliament, Oct 07; training for EYB in May/June 08. 130 young people registered an interest and all secondary schools were contacted, with Youth Service, voluntary and faith sectors and agencies working with targeted groups to advertise the opportunity to join the EYB and the Youth Opportunity Fund Youth Capital Fund Grant Panel. Recruitment and training in June and July for 22 EYB members and 22 YOG/YCF Grant panel members.</p> <p><b>Knowsley:</b> Children and Young People's Forum established in April 07. Initial meeting took place in May 07 with 15 young people attending and a team building/training residential held in June 07 with 18 young people. The CYP Forum has been renamed S.P.A.R.K (Shout Participation All Round Knowsley) by young people and had 20 young volunteer members attending meetings in Sept 07; Dec 07; Feb 08; April 08.</p> <p>CICC being developed, three meetings with LAC young people - Nov 07; Jan 08; Feb 08; April 08. Number of young people involved = 13.</p>



		<p><b>Liverpool:</b> A major initiative has been the development of Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs), which are now an established part of the local democratic process. Each Neighbourhood Committee has a corresponding YAG made up of young people and up to 2 elected member representatives. The YAGs meet at least 5 times per year, to reflect the cycle of Neighbourhood Committee meetings. The meetings are supported by a youth worker, but the young people set the agenda and produce the minutes. Discussion is on topics of concern or interest to the young people in the area and many YAGs have chosen to invite representatives from other agencies, such as Merseyside Police and Connexions, in order to raise issues of concern. The minutes of these meetings are submitted to Neighbourhood Committees and are considered under a standing agenda item. At a conference for YAG members, young people talked about how involvement had given them 'the chance to make decisions and ask questions' and how they particularly enjoyed the 'heated discussions' (report extract 2007). In <b>2008/9</b></p> <p><b>Wirral:</b> The Executive Youth Board (EYB) and The Youth Opportunity Fund/ Youth Capital fund Grant panel (YOF/YCF) were established in June 2008. Young people from EYB are full members of Wirral Youth &amp; Play Service Advisory Committee (YAPSAC), providing an interface between elected Members and young people. Members of EYB chaired the October meeting of YAPSAC and plans are in hand for them to chair the next meeting and to have this filmed for Wirral's website. The EYB planned, set the agenda, and identified speakers for the Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament in October 2008. The Youth Parliament included a session for the EYB to agreed priorities for 2008/09 with elected Members and young people. Members of EYB were full members of the assessment panel to determine Wirral's nomination to My Place. Representatives of EYB facilitated and chaired a Masterclass on Participation at the North Of England Education Conference in January 2009. Currently in the process of establishing links between the EYB and the Children in Care Council.</p>
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		<p><b>Knowsley:</b> The Children and Young People's Forum, known as S.P.A.R.K (Shout Participation All Round Knowsley) is now fully established as part of a recognised Children and Young People's Governance Structure. Membership is increasing with broad representation from 22 young people, including CWD, BME, Young Carers, CLA, LGBT, Connexions, YWCA, Youth Service, Wellbeing Service, and YOS. S.P.A.R.K is a sub-group of the Children and Young People's Executive and the young person chair is elected by his/her peers to sit on the Executive. In addition, the Executive Director of Children and Family Services has regular meetings with the Chair of S.P.A.R.K and Knowsley's elected Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) to hear directly the views of children and young people's groups in Knowsley, to develop solutions together.</p> <p>The Children in Care Council (CICC) has been developed with an Advisory Group, known as M.A.D.E (Making A Difference Everywhere) for looked after young people with peer support from young people leaving care and Knowsley Young Advisors. The young people led an event in June 08 with 30 CLA to develop a Children In Care Pledge. Proposals on the Pledge and CICC were endorsed at the Children and Young People's Executive, Sept 08. 15 M.A.D.E members regularly attend monthly meetings and have produced the CLA pledge, to be launched in April 09.</p> <p>Aug 08 - S.P.A.R.K model used to establish a Knowsley Children and Young People's LINKed-Up (Local Involvement Network) as a reference group to provide an opportunity for children and young people to influence on how Health and Wellbeing Services are planned, commissioned and run. To set these priorities a 'Let's Talk Health' Consultation was held in Jan '09 for young people and relevant services, led by Young Advisors.</p> <p><b>Liverpool</b></p> <p>Liverpool began targeting under-represented groups. The Disabled Advisory Council (DAC) was initiated and linked into the Youth Council. A similar model was used to incorporate Looked after Children and Young People and Young Offenders. July 08 - 3 LAC employed as Street Mates.</p>
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		<p>Jan 09 - To date 7 LAC recruited who are developing a conference in March 09 to widen the involvement of LAC.</p> <p>Sept 08 - training delivered to 8 staff involved in the LAC sector &amp; more joined up work between youth service and LAC is now evolving with partners from Social services and Connexions.</p> <p>March 09 - Development of shadow cabinet linking directly into elected Members.</p>
Numbers of presentations or reports by young people to strategic bodies.	<p><b>2006/7:</b> Not known.</p>	<p>No of reports/presentations by young people to strategic bodies during <b>2007/8:</b></p> <p><b>Wirral</b> = Young people presented questions to strategic officers including the Chief Executive at the Youth Voice Conference in October 2007. Young people at the Youth Parliament debated and voted with elected members on the priorities for the Youth Offer. Homeless young people presented to Youth and Play Service Advisory Committee, Jan 08.</p> <p>Two young people gave presentations at conferences on Aiming High, a regional conference in Oct 2007 and a national event in April 2008.</p> <p>Young people presented ideas in focus group with Technical Services on recycling (Dec 07).</p> <p><b>Knowsley:</b> S.P.A.R.K members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- were consulted on CYP Strategic Plan 2007-10 and presented report to CYP Executive with an evaluation of content, design and value which influenced changes to be made prior to publication.</li> <li>- led DCS Staff Conference to set context and vision for future service delivery with over 300 delegates in Nov 07.</li> <li>- gave presentation at a Partnership Conference About the Child 2, which considered the role of children and young people as leaders.</li> <li>- led Focus Group with homeless young people and a Workshop for KMBC Housing Strategy. March 08.</li> <li>- gave presentation at H&amp;SC Managers Conference. April 08 April 08.</li> <li>- Four members attended DCSF consultation on the Youth</li> </ul>

		<p>Taskforce Action Plan and had the opportunity to influence the Plan, which has now been published.</p> <p>- LAC young people and CICC members attended National Youth Voice Regional Event to present &amp; share best practice on establishing CICC. March 08</p> <p><b>Liverpool:</b> Youth Council and YAGs working with individual locally elected members. Evaluation of Youth Advisory Groups report produced.</p> <p>In <b>2008/9:</b></p> <p><b>Wirral:</b> At the Youth Parliament in 2008, the EYB presented their proposed priorities for the coming year for consultation. At the Youth and Play Service Advisory Committee in October, the EYB presented the final list of priorities and chaired the YAPSAC meeting. At YAPSAC in February, the Youth Opportunity Fund Grant Panel/ Youth Capital Fund grant panel decisions regarding the allocation of the funds were presented. EYB held a scrutiny meeting with Chief Officers from Wirral regarding the proposed Strategic Asset Review. At the Youth Voice Conference in October, the YOF/YCF consulted with young people and the decision was taken to top slice the YCF fund in 2009/10 by £250K to provide better access to transport &amp; leisure for young people.</p> <p><b>Knowsley:</b> Sept 08 – Chair &amp; members of S.P.A.R.K presented report to the Children &amp; Young People's Executive with proposals in respect of the Pledge and CICC, which was endorsed.</p> <p>Oct 08 – Raised profile of CICC and Pledge at Local Democracy Week Event. LAC young people and Young Advisors presented issues to Councillors and Chief Officers during 'Speak Up', a drama and discussion workshop to challenge stereotypes and to increase knowledge and understanding of issues and each other.</p> <p>Ongoing – S.P.A.R.K chair attends quarterly Children and Young People's Executive meetings to report Forum priorities, including the YOF/YCF Grant Panel decisions &amp; allocation of funds, which is also reported to the Knowsley Joint Commissioning Board.</p> <p>February 09 - S.P.A.R.K members present to Scrutiny Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group to report young people's views and review diversion and dispersion tools used by KMBC and partners</p>
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		<p>to tackle anti-social behaviour.</p> <p><b>Liverpool:</b> A "State of Care in the City" debate was held as part of the Youth Services Question time involving 20 young people and key staff from the Looked After sector. (Oct 08)</p> <p>Young people are planning a Conference for March 09, to encourage LAC to form their own forum and link into the Youth Council. Estimated attendance of 100 LAC young people and 20 foster carers.</p> <p>Plans in hand to develop a Shadow Cabinet along the lines of Wirral's EYB to develop the influence of the young people and the Youth Council further.</p>
<p><b>How well did they do it?</b></p> <p>No of young people involved in new strategic bodies/mechanisms from target groups:</p> <p>NEET</p> <p>BME groups</p> <p>Young people looked after</p> <p>Young people with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD)</p>	<p>No of young people involved in new strategic mechanisms from target groups in <b>2006/7</b>.</p> <p><b>Wirral</b> = 0 as EYB not yet formed.</p> <p><b>Knowsley</b> = 0 as KCICC not yet formed.</p> <p><b>Liverpool</b> = only occasional involvement of target groups in YAGs.</p>	<p>No of young people involved in new strategic mechanisms from target groups during <b>2007/8</b>.</p> <p><b>Wirral:</b> 4 young people from vulnerable groups in YOF/YCF Grant panel (1 each from homeless, LDD, young carers and LAC). 4 young people on Wirral Youth &amp; Play Service Advisory Cttee.</p> <p>2 vulnerable young people were members of the reference group advising on the roll out of the Integrated Youth Support Strategy.</p> <p><b>Knowsley:</b> S.P.A.R.K membership of 20 young people includes 3 young carers, 2 BME, 3 LDD (<i>including one HIV Positive</i>), 3 LAC, one LGBT. Young Chair of S.P.A.R.K is elected by peers to represent children and young people on CYP Executive and two young representatives sit on CYP Partnership Board. Knowsley CICC is being developed by an Advisory Group of 13 LAC.</p> <p><b>Liverpool:</b> 2 LDD young people regularly attending DAC.</p> <p>In <b>2008/9:</b></p> <p><b>Wirral:</b> 16 on strategic boards but others will be involved via other routes e.g. Youth forums and youth clubs. 45 young people in total have been involved in strategic decision making bodies either EYB or the YOF/YCF Grant Panel.</p> <p><b>Knowsley:</b> S.P.A.R.K membership of 22 young people. Chair of S.P.A.R.K representative on CYP Executive and 2 young representatives sit on CYP Partnership Board.</p>

		<p>6 Young Advisors are Area Representatives for Area Partnership Boards.</p> <p>Knowsley Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) and chair of S.P.A.R.K regularly meet directly with Executive Director of Children and Family Services.</p> <p>S.P.A.R.K Forum is the recognised engagement focus for Knowsley Safeguarding Children Board.</p> <p>Increase in number of LAC involved in decision making via CICC and M.A.D.E currently at 15 but invitation to attend launch of CLA pledge will be made to all 305 looked after children and young people in Knowsley.</p> <p>5 Young Offenders currently on Knowsley Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) attended Innovation Catalyst Focus Group consultation.</p> <p>February 09 – Newly elected Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for Knowsley is a LDD young person. His three campaign issues of campaign include: places to go for young people, disabled young people and gangs.</p> <p><b>Liverpool:</b> An increase in the number of LAC involved in the decision making process currently at 7 but after the conference could be 100.</p> <p>15 young people attending DAC with two reps feeding into the Youth Council</p> <p>12 young people from the YOS regularly attending YOS forum.</p>
Means of accreditation created or existing schemes used	<p>Accreditation in place in <b>2006/7</b>:</p> <p>BTEC mentoring (Wirral)</p> <p>Duke of Edinburgh's Award "Service" accreditation (Wirral)</p> <p>Liverpool-OCN Understanding Peer Mentoring (Level one)</p> <p>30 Street Mates</p> <p>60 Health Mates.</p> <p>LDD participants using Duke of Edinburgh awards.</p>	<p>Accreditation created or existing schemes used (and participants numbers) in 2007/8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wirral</b> = Duke of Edinburgh's Award has been used to accredit Participation activities on Wirral. The number of young people directly affected has been 24.</li> <li>• <b>Knowsley</b> = Silver and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award used to accredit Participation activities. The number of young people accredited is 25.</li> <li>• 11 Young Advisors are working towards ASDAN award;</li> </ul>

		<p>the same 11 have successfully completed National Young Advisors Training Programme. 8 Young Advisors have trained as Internal Participation Standards Assessors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Liverpool</b> = Courses offered as recorded outcomes In <b>2008/9</b>:</li> </ul> <p><b>Wirral</b> = Further accreditation schemes being explored. 45 young people directly benefited, but other young people have also benefited from decisions involving My Place and YOF/YCF.</p> <p><b>Knowsley</b> = 52 young people achieved Participation Accreditation</p> <p><b>Liverpool</b> = OCN level one Courses taken by 90 young people, 4 LAC, 6 LDD, 4 BME.</p> <p>6 LDD using The Duke of Edinburgh to accredit participation.</p>
<p><b>Is anyone better off? - Quantitative</b></p> <p>Number of young people gaining accreditation, qualifications from the process.</p>	<p>No of young people gaining accreditation/qualifications during <b>2006/7</b>: not known.</p>	<p>No of young people gaining accreditation/qualifications during <b>2007/8</b>:</p> <p><b>Wirral</b>: 24</p> <p><b>Knowsley</b>: Participation Accreditation – 44</p> <p><b>Liverpool</b>: 60 working towards accreditation.</p> <p>In <b>2008/9</b></p> <p><b>Wirral</b>: 45.</p> <p><b>Knowsley</b>: Participation Accreditation – 52</p> <p>Plus ASDAN Young Advisors Accreditation – 8.</p> <p>In March 09 recruitment of a further 18 Young Advisors is planned with training to be completed in April 09.</p> <p><b>Liverpool</b>: 30 OCN level 1 pending moderation.</p>
<p><b>Is anyone better off? - Qualitative</b></p> <p>Young people's evaluations of benefits.</p> <p>Responses from stakeholders such as Social Care managers and Commissioning Teams, Fostering Services etc.</p>		<p><b>Wirral</b>: young people from the EYB and YOF/YCF grant panel were involved in commissioning services relating to the Teenage pregnancy strategy and Positive Activities for young people, and work with young people involved in Risk Taking Behaviour</p> <p>Young people's feed back in interviews and Positive Impact records show benefits of participation.</p>

## APPENDIX B - Definitions of Volunteering –how the schemes involved young people as volunteers

Through the Beacon Peer Support Programme for Positive Youth Engagement, young people have had the opportunity to become volunteers in a number of ways. Types of volunteering can overlap.

Type of Volunteering	Examples from Beacon Programme	Why is it volunteering?
<b>Mutual Aid or Self Help</b>	Derwentside – BME and Disabled young people tailoring volunteering training to meet their own needs Gateshead – Peer mentoring Lancashire – Development of a volunteer mentoring process Lewisham – Peer Mentoring by Young Managers Wakefield – Peer mentoring West Sussex – Using creative medium to give LAC a say on services affecting their lives. West Sussex – Peer mentoring for LAC.	Young people have used their views and experience to help support other young people.
<b>Philanthropy or Service to Others</b>	Derwentside – volunteering in sports clubs and youth clubs Lancashire – diverse range of volunteering opportunities including museums, road safety, environmental health & countryside services.	Young people are providing additional capacity in public services.
<b>Participation (including involvement in political or decision-making processes on a voluntary basis)</b>	Derwentside – Youth Forums Gateshead – Young people as evaluators/inspectors of services Lewisham – Young Managers Board Norfolk – Engaging young people in decision making. Wakefield – Using creative arts to engage hard to reach young people in consultation about public services. West Sussex – Children in Care Council West Sussex – Using creative medium to give LAC a say on services affecting their lives. Wirral – Executive Youth Board	Young people have used their views and experience to help shape and improve local services and to ensure their relevance to other young people. Young people are also acting as engaged citizens and are taking part in local democracy.



## APPENDIX C

### List of adult respondents

The following adults were interviewed individually or occasionally in small groups. They were all involved in the various Beacon schemes as staff, partners or stakeholders.

#### Youth volunteering national partners

Tony Breslin	Chief Executive, Citizenship Foundation
Kathleen Cronin	Chief Executive, British Youth Council
Fiona Dawe	Chief Executive, Youthnet UK
Davina Goodchild	Chief Executive, Youth Action Network
Dave Phillips	Senior Development Officer, National Youth Agency
Rena Sodhi	Director of Programme, v.

#### Derwentside, Stockton and Sedgefield

Andy Coulthard	Sedgefield Borough Council
Sarah Dougherty	Children and Young People's Participation Officer, Derwentside District Council
Chris Downie	Stockton Borough Council
Ashley Johnson	Youth Bus Worker, Spice Project, Stockton
Nicola Robinson	Project Officer, Derwentside District Council
Shirley Stenburge	Youth Support Officer, Stockton Borough Council

#### Gateshead, South Tyneside and Durham

Yvonne Cook	Youth Development Worker, Empowering Young People Pilot, Durham
Pam Douglas	Young Person's Service Development Coordinator, Sexual Health Promotion Service, Gateshead
Steve Graham	Connexions Manager, Gateshead
Brid Graney	Business Strategy and Support Service, Gateshead Council
Vicky Harrison	Youth Worker, Gateshead
Helen Hunter	Connexions Quality Manager, Tyne and Wear
Martin Lahiffe	Participation and Citizenship Coordinator, Durham
Jenna Lawson	Regional Participation Officer, Regional Youth Work Unit, Tyne and Wear
Chris Nevis	Head of Service, Children and Young People, Gateshead Council
Harry Matthews	Youth and Community Learning Manager (Youth), Gateshead
Tracey Moore	Youth Participation Officer, South Tyneside
Roger Osborne	Senior Youth and Community Learning Worker, Gateshead
Aisling Sullivan	Youth and Community Worker, Beacon project lead, Gateshead

#### Lancashire, Burnley and Pendle

Ghazanfar Akram	Lancashire Youth Association
John Clark	Lancashire County Council
Gina Cole	Project Development Worker, Burnley Borough Council
Rebecca Cronshaw	Neighbourhood Management Team, Pendle Borough Council
Rehana Koser	Lancashire Youth Association
Martyn Lawrenson	Youth and Community Service, County Accreditation Coordinator, Lancashire
Carol Sanderson	Strategic Development Officer, Lancashire County Council

#### Lewisham, Medway and Southwark

Maralyn Bonsu	Administrator and part-time youth worker, Lewisham
Dave Dowie	Head of Service, Youth Service, Lewisham
Sarahjane Forrester	Participation Worker, Lewisham
Tanya Edwards	Connexions Manager, Lewisham
Paul Leahey	Engagement and Participation Manager, Youth and Adventure Play Service, Lewisham Council
Robyn Linden	Operational Manager, Youth Offending Service, Lewisham
Kamal Uddin	Youth Worker, Crime Concern
Geoff Waters	Acting Principal Youth Officer, Medway Youth Service
Andy Willetts	Area Manager, Medway Youth Service

#### Norfolk and Bassetlaw

Steve Brown	Lead Officer, Children and Young People, Bassetlaw District Council
Eddie Burgess	District Youth Work Manager, Bassetlaw, Nottinghamshire County Council
Robin Konieczny	County Active Citizenship Co-ordinator, Youth Service, Norfolk County Council
Vicky Rawson	Development Manager, Focus on Young People in Bassetlaw
Esther Watt	Policy and Scrutiny Coordinator, Bassetlaw District Council

#### Wakefield, NE Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire

Suzanne Gahlings	Information, Empowerment and Advocacy Team Manager, Wakefield Young People's Service
Stuart Hawkes	HQ Arts
James Koppert	Youth Arts Coordinator, North Yorkshire County Council
Karen Quigley	HQ Arts
Tracey Slattery	Project Coordinator, Integrated Young People's Support Service, NE Lincolnshire Council
Dave Taylor	Wakefield Council

Paula Taylor	Arts and Culture Officer for Children and Young People's Service, North Yorkshire
Helen Townend	Wakefield Council
West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove	
Meshelle Dixon	Youth Participation Worker, East Sussex
Pandora Ellis	Youth Cabinet Worker, West Sussex County Council
Tracey Farmer	Youth Participation Coordinator, West Sussex County Council
Mike Marchant	Social Services 14 plus team, West Sussex County Council
Claire McKinley	YAP, Brighton and Hove
Tina Owens	YAP, Brighton and Hove
Emma Sutton	PAR (Participation and Advocacy and Rights for Looked After Children), West Sussex Children's Society
Debbie Redman	Foster carer
Ann Willis	Project worker, "It Happens" young parents' project
Wirral, Liverpool and Knowsley	
Moiria Bridge	Youth Worker, Wirral
Sam Champion	Personal Adviser, Young Person's Team, Health and Well Being Department, Knowsley
Councillor Phil Davies	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Ward Councillor, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Peter Edmondson	Head of Branch, Participation and Inclusion, Children and Young People's Department, Wirral
Councillor Karen Hayes	Ward Councillor, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Patricia Jackson	Engagement and Participation Manager, DCFS, Knowsley Council
Debbie McCabe	Senior Youth Engagement Officer, Wirral
Maureen McDaid	Principal Youth Officer, Wirral
Tom McKenna	Engagement and Participation Officer, Knowsley
Maria Milford	Advanced Practitioner, Youth Service, Liverpool
Colin Scicluna	Interim Young Adviser Lead, Knowsley
Cathy Wareing	Area Manager Youth Service, Liverpool
Dave Webster	Coordinator of Advocacy Services, Knowsley, National Youth Advocacy Service
Gill Thornton	Assistant Commissioning Manager, Education Support, Children's Services, Liverpool City Council

## APPENDIX D

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## **APPENDIX E**

### **Relevant recommendations from the Russell Commission**

#### **Recommendation 9**

There is untapped potential for young volunteers to give additional help within the public sector, for example in hospitals, schools, parks and sports, leisure and arts centres, to gain valuable experience and deliver tangible community benefit. There are particular opportunities to involve young people in shaping local services and as active citizens in local democracy.

- Government should develop and implement strategies to encourage greater levels of volunteering within public services taking account of the need for additionality and quality opportunities that are attractive to young people;
- Government should involve young people at the highest level to help establish the types of roles that would appeal to them;
- Government should consider the possibility of establishing a series of pilot projects in 2006-07 to examine the most appropriate ways to involve young volunteers, and set targets for their involvement.

#### **Also**

#### **Recommendation 4**

It should be commonplace for young people to volunteer whilst they are at school, college or in higher education. All education institutions should have a volunteering ethos. This will require:

- better information on volunteering opportunities through access to the “portal” and targeted awareness campaigns;
- a stronger emphasis on volunteering within the citizenship curriculum and training for citizenship teachers;
- making the most of the opportunities for volunteers within extended schools, community schools, and their equivalents, providing leadership on new volunteering roles for the school sector as a whole;
- a new role for young volunteers working with local advisors to links schools, sixth-forms, further education colleges and higher education institutions with volunteer centres and local opportunity providers.

#### **Recommendation 7**

There should be a step change in the number of young people volunteering and the diversity of young volunteers. This will require a significant expansion in the number of available opportunities – short-term, part-time and full-time – with effective targeting to ensure that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to volunteer.

#### **Recommendation 11**

The opportunity to improve skills and employability is a powerful incentive for young people to volunteer. It is important to mark the contribution made by

young volunteers, and to recognise the skills they learn in the course of their activity.

The aspirations of young people will be met best through a progression of awards and accreditation that recognises the commitment they show and the skills they gain in the course of their volunteering;

- a personal appraisal system to ensure that young people have clear objectives, support and a records of achievement;
- wider use of the Youth Achievement Award to recognise young people's personal development through volunteering;
- (S)NVQ modules for those volunteering opportunities – part and full-time – where more formal vocational accreditation is appropriate.

### **Recommendation 12**

Young people on benefits, and their families, should not suffer a financial loss when they volunteer. To make it easier for young people on benefits to volunteer:

- a rulebook should be published by the Department of Work and Pensions to communicate existing rules more effectively to staff in Job Centre Plus, and for interested parties such as volunteer involving organisations and local authorities, with a short summary guide to be widely distributed for volunteer involving organisations and young volunteers;
- the implementation body should make available a discretionary fund that providers of full-time opportunities in the framework could access for individual cases of hardship due to housing costs, loss of family benefits or childcare costs;
- government should consider looking at the general Housing Benefit interactions for volunteers within its current review of Housing Benefit as a whole;
- within its wider Review of Financial Support for 16-19 year olds, government should extend the same entitlements received by those in education or training to those who engage in full-time volunteering opportunities.

### **Recommendation 13**

In order to build the capacity of organisations to engage groups which historically have found it difficult to access volunteering, specifically disabled volunteers, the Commission recommends that government explore the case for the establishment of a cross-departmental initiative to facilitate:

- disability audits, to identify barriers to volunteering and enable organisations to develop appropriate action plans;
- disability awareness and equality training for staff and volunteers;
- structural renovations to make buildings more accessible.