



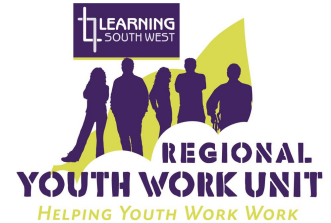
Quality Assurance Criteria for Somerset Integrated Youth Support and Development services for young people aged 11-19

March 2010

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by
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Learning South West was asked to support Somerset County Council in developing a quality assurance framework for its internally delivered services for young people aged 11-19.

These services include those delivered by Somerset County Council and commissioned partners which can be categorised as:

- 1-1 work
- developmental group work and informal learning
- level of access, uptake and quality of local Youth Offer
- family work
- community based work

This includes work delivered by targeted and specialist services such as Youth Offending Team and Leaving Care, and open access provision by Local Service Teams, Extended Services and voluntary and community organisations

This work follows on from the development of Somerset County Council's Integrated Youth Support and Development Strategy in April 2009 and aims to ensure that young people are able to access good quality services that work effectively together to enable children and young people to meet desired outcomes.

Methods

Over August and September 2009, the project team interviewed members of the QA task group and other key individuals to establish existing QA processes and systems; identify common ground, good practice and gaps. Specific service managers were interviewed to ascertain service needs and areas for development. See Appendix 1 for a list of those interviewed for this research.

The information and learning we gained from these interviews, along with a review of models of assessing practice from a range of national initiatives has informed the development of our proposed templates for quality assurance in targeted and universal interventions with groups of young people and of supporting young people's transitions between services.

Existing QA processes and systems

We found a number of areas of good QA practice already in place within different IYS&D service areas:

1) Casework: The new casework management system to ensure quality and child protection is being embedded across services. Those interviewed articulated clearly how this is being used to improve practice. Work is also underway on trying to bring together different management information systems. Although this has not yet been fully resolved, there are enough 'patches' in place to ensure a consistency of approach. For example, youth workers in LSTs have started to use EYS to record details of young people contacted but record other management information on Performance Indicators on separate systems.

2) Supervision: Most of the service areas we interviewed had a consistent use of supervision and actively used this tool to monitor quality of case management and the programme of work. This is backed up by workforce development focused on supervision skills for managers. However, supervision is not an integral part of the culture in all service areas, and some inconsistencies will need to be addressed

3) Children and young people's feedback: Children's Centres were not included directly in these interviews as they cater for children aged 0-5 and their families, however their approach to stakeholder feedback was highlighted as good practice. Each Children's Centre has an annual 'Conversation': a user run meeting which has an open agenda, and is an annual opportunity for stakeholders including users, families, workers and the wider community, to come together to give feedback on a range of issues. The 'Conversation' is scheduled to feed into the planning cycle for the Centre. LSTs are starting to think about ways to involve young people in determining feedback on services from other young people- this aspect of work is still in development.

Somerset Youth **Participation Standards** provide a way of measuring young people's involvement in quality assurance.

4) 'Kite Marks' of quality: Extended Services encourage schools to adopt the **Study Support Code of Practice**, produced by QiSS (Quality in Study Support, University of Canterbury)¹. This is a kite mark of quality for study support. ES pay costs and provide significant support to schools to attain the standard. The issue is the time taken to put together portfolio of evidence and work towards the standards. Early Years have developed a Quality Improvement Tool called **Flying Higher**² for childminders, childcare settings and childminder networks. This is voluntary but is well regarded by settings so the majority opt to be involved. Again, Early Years provide significant support to settings to achieve the standards.

5) Targeted Positive Activities: there are clear arrangements in place for identifying the positive outcomes of targeted positive activities delivered and managed through the Youth Offending Team, supported by models drawn from Youth Justice Board and a strong ethos of supervision as a learning tool.

¹ 'The Study Support Code of Practice: Improving the quality of out of hours learning', DfES, 2004

² 'Flying Higher – a quality improvement tool for all types of integrated childcare and education' Ed. Nyree Squires, Somerset County Council Play and Childcare Learning Team

Key gaps in QA processes

It is recognised that the different agencies and service areas in IYSD in Somerset will have different requirements for quality assurance criteria, depending on the nature of the work they do with young people. However, our research highlighted two key gaps in QA processes across the service areas in Somerset IYSD:

- a) Quality standards for interventions with groups of young people (positive activities) both in targeted and open access settings
- b) Quality standards for transitions between different elements of youth support services, including referral processes and collaborative working.

This document proposes QA criteria that could bring more consistency in these two areas.

Interventions with groups of young people

Work with groups of young people aged 11-19 is undertaken by a number of different organisations and teams under the broad framework of Integrated Youth Support and Development. Potentially, targeted and/or open access group work could be undertaken by:

- Staff working on extended schools programmes
- Youth Offending Team
- Youth Workers
- Local Personal Advisers
- Team 4
- Voluntary organisations commissioned or grant aided
- Private and independent organisations commissioned for specific programmes

Several such programmes are funded through specific government funding programmes, while others are part of the mainstream Children's Trust 'offer' to young people. In some cases, funding bodies require particular reporting and monitoring information: in other cases, this is more flexible, with organisations and teams devising their own monitoring processes. This leads to potential duplication of effort, and significant inconsistencies in capturing evidence of the effectiveness of these interventions. We recommend that an overall framework of standards and monitoring for targeted and universal group interventions is established in Somerset to bring greater consistency of practice and provide better information on the effectiveness of such interventions.

Transitions

Integrated working is still relatively new in Somerset, and a theme of our interviews was a sense of uncertainty about how different teams and organisations should work together. Particular points of tension and confusion were referral between organisations, and transition arrangements for young people moving from specialised programmes or provision (such as the end of Offender Orders, or access to wider support for young people moving between care settings). We recommend that some basic standards for referrals and transitions are put in place and monitored.

Annexes

The annexes to this report present proposed standards and sources of evidence for group work interventions and transitions. The standards have incorporated feedback from a range of partners and should now be tested through implementation

Gill Millar & Tessa Hibbert, March 2010

Appendix 1: List of interviews for this research

Jeff Brown Youth Work
Vera Back Early Years
Sarah Miller Extended Schools/Services
Phil Spooner Connexions Contract Manager
Judy Donovan Business Support Manager, Partnerships
Sarvjit Gill Case Work Team Manager, North Mendip Local Service Team
Wendy Jenner YOT Prevention Manager
Nik Harwood Local Service Team Leader, West Somerset
Helen MacDonald Workforce Devt
Karen Leafe Team 4 (Targeted Support), South Somerset
Chris Frost Children & Young People's Directorate



Date: March 2010

ANNEX 1

Standards for Targeted and Open access interventions with groups of young people (11-19)

These standards relate to work with young people aged 11-19 which takes place in groups, rather than on a 1-1 basis. They refer to both short term, planned group work programmes and open access positive activities sessions in a range of settings including youth projects, out of school activities and holiday projects. The terms 'programme' and 'intervention' are both used in the document: in general, programme will refer to a planned programme or curriculum spread over a number of sessions, while intervention will refer to a specific occasion on which a worker engages with young people.

A quality intervention with a group of young people should:

- Contribute to young people's personal development, including their attitudes, values and self-confidence
- Add to young people's knowledge, skills and understanding
- Enhance young people's ability to function socially and politically as both autonomous individuals and responsible members of the community
- Be based on an assessment of the needs of all the young people, and aspire to meet all their needs
- Demonstrate leadership by workers in supporting, guiding and challenging young people

The templates below seek to turn these aspirational statements into standards by which practice can be measured. The template is based on some key assumptions:

- Delivery staff record both quantitative and qualitative aspects of their work consistently
- Managers and commissioners formally observe staff's practice with young people on a regular basis, so that each member of staff or staff team is observed at least twice a year.
- Supervision is used as a tool to enable staff to reflect on their practice and seek ways of improving their work with young people
- Feedback from young people and their parents/carers is encouraged and impacts on how provision is delivered

The template is based on the concept of the **APIR (Assessment, Planning, Implementation, Review)** cycle, and the elements follow this logic.

For each aspect of a 'quality intervention' the template indicates standards that would be expected in a 'good' intervention and potential sources of evidence to support judgements.

Group work Interventions

(e.g. Targeted PAYP; closed groups for young people with specific needs including those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties; youth clubs; activity programmes; short and long term youth projects)

The standards are designed to apply across open access and targeted group work interventions. There will be differences, however, between the expectations of focused targeted programmes and those which are intended to be open to all young people in a given area. Where standards apply only to targeted, or only to open access settings they are colour coded appropriately

A = All
T = Targeted
OA = Open Access

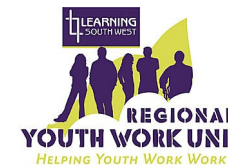
Element	Standards	Evidence sources
Assessment		
<p>Needs Assessment <i>This section covers both individual needs and the needs of communities and groups of young people</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff can articulate which National Indicators the project aims to support A • Consideration has been given to the needs of participating young people in relation to relevant NIs. A • The activities in the programme have been planned with the needs and demands of the participants in mind A • Existing provision in this area has been mapped and this project does not duplicate provision made by an existing provider A <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAF, ASSET or other documented assessment has been carried out for each participating young person T <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people in the locality have been consulted about their preferences for youth provision, including content, timings and location OA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording/MI systems • CAF • Staff supervision meetings and notes • Programme plan • Family Services Directory • Awsom • Records of local consultations
Planning		
<p>Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme is planned and the expected learning and achievement of participants is articulated A • Young people are involved in planning significant elements of the programme A • There are systems in place to record young people's learning and progress through the programme A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme plan including targets • Supervision records • Recording/MI systems which capture the anticipated outcomes from the programme as well as quantitative data

Element	Standards	Evidence sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identified needs of individual participants inform the content of the programme T • Targeted programme plans include how young people will make transitions to other provision at the end of the programme T • Where appropriate parents and carers are aware that the young person is involved and understand the purpose of the programme T 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAF Action Plans and Exit Strategies • Communications with parents/carers
Staff and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff working on the programme are appropriately skilled and qualified to successfully deliver the programme A • The programme has sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff (including volunteers) to deliver the project safely and successfully A • Programme activities have been assessed for risks and comply with health and safety requirements A • Equipment, premises and transport used for the programme are sufficient, fit for purpose, accessible and of good quality A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers and commissioners agree the required skills and qualifications and check that these are in place, in line with the Training and Workforce Matrix • Staff are encouraged through supervision and PRAD/appraisal to gain relevant skills and qualifications (supervision and PRAD records) • Risk assessments and H&S processes are in place and monitored • Staff and volunteers have undertaken CRB checks • Formal recorded manager or independent observations
Recruitment of/ promotion to young people and referring agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where programmes are promoted directly to young people a clear plan for promotion and marketing is in place before the start of the programme A • For programmes that young people can join at any time, the promotion plan ensures that key agencies and communities continue to be aware of the programme throughout its life A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral protocols implemented • Promotional activity and materials

Element	Standards	Evidence sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where programmes accept referrals from other agencies, there are clear protocols in place which set out the aims of the programme, anticipated outcomes, specify the target group and how requests for involvement will be handled T • Open access provision is promoted to young people and their parents/carers through appropriate web sites and other media including Awsom; local newsletters and bulletins and to local schools and colleges OA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional activity and materials • Supervision discussions and records • Common Request for Involvement forms used and monitored • Awsom • Publicity in local newsletters/bulletins • Surveys of young people's awareness of local provision
Young People's involvement in planning and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When young people join a programme, their views are sought on what they would like to achieve, their interests, the kinds of activities they would like to take part in A • As the programme progresses, young people's views are consistently sought to help evaluate the programme, and ensure it continues to meet needs A • Young people are encouraged to play an active part in organising group activities A • Young people are supported to develop leadership and team work skills through leading and delivering elements of the programme A • Long term interventions evolve formal methods of young people making an input into planning and design A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written or visual evidence of young people's involvement • Formal recorded manager and independent observations • Feedback from young people • Structures in place (meetings, reference group etc) to involve young people in planning • Young people receive accredited awards that demonstrate their leadership of programmes

Element	Standards	Evidence sources
Implementation		
<p>Young people gain knowledge, skills and confidence that enhances their personal and social development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The planned programme includes a range of challenging, creative and enjoyable activities and opportunities for young people to experience new situations in a supportive environment A • Project staff build positive relationships with young people that support and challenge young people to reflect on issues that affect their lives A • Young people experience working with others and gain understanding of how they can operate effectively as part of a group or team A • Young people develop networks of support to help them deal with difficult situations and events A • Young people's aspirations and understanding of potential options are enhanced as a result of the programme A • Young people gain knowledge and understanding of issues that affect their lives A • Young people develop practical skills in new areas A • The skills and knowledge that young people gain are recognised through accredited awards A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme • Feedback from young people • Formal recorded manager and independent observations • Supervision discussions and records • Project records • Young people's progress and reflections are recorded systematically • Young people gain accredited awards • Celebration events focused on young people's achievements
<p>Transitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment is made of the level of support each individual young person will need to enable them to engage with open access provision and other services T • By the end of a targeted group intervention, support is in place to enable young people to use open access provision in order to continue their development T • With the young person's agreement, information on their progress is shared with the provider of relevant open access provision T 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people's progression to other services/ provision is monitored and recorded one month after the end of a targeted programme • CAF outcome forms and exit strategies • Feedback from partner agencies • Established referral pathways between specialist services and

Element	Standards	Evidence sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff in open access provision encourage young people with additional needs to engage with group activities and work with referring agencies to develop individual support packages as appropriate OA 	<p>targeted and open access providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reviews of success of referrals from targeted to open access provision MI on numbers of young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties using the provision Staff from open access provision are involved in case review processes Staff training records
Review		
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time limited programmes and projects undertake evaluation at the end of the programme which includes the views of participants and partner organisations A Open-ended provision undertakes regular (at least annual) evaluation of the programme which includes the views of participants, partner organisations and local communities A Evaluation reports show how young people have progressed in learning and achievement and how provision has impacted on social outcomes A Critical feedback on the programme is addressed in future planning and delivery A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summative evaluation reports providing quantitative and qualitative information Evaluation reports show how programmes will be adapted in the light of feedback Regular review processes which engage key stakeholders (Children's Centres Annual Conversation provides a model for this) Staff supervision notes Planned improvements and amendments included in planning documentation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted providers seek the views of referring agencies on the impact of their programmes T 	



Date: March 2010

ANNEX 2

Standards for transitions and pathways between specialist, targeted, preventative and universal services for young people aged 11-19

A key feature of the aspirations for services to young people in Somerset is the 'One Door' concept (Somerset Integrated Youth Support and Development Strategy, June 2009). In order to achieve this, transitions between services should be seamless and straightforward. The TDA Additional Guidance for Targeted Youth Support (2008) identified some of the features that enable support across transitions. The TDA Guidance states that full implementation of Targeted Youth Support would include '*key Children's Trust partners have agreed quality standards for referral routes and access to services in universal settings [with] monitoring processes to ensure compliance*'

This document seeks to put this into the context for Somerset and build on existing positive practices by developing standards by which practice can be measured.

The template is based on some key assumptions:

- Professional staff working with 11-19 year olds across IYSD, including commissioned provision, understand the roles and responsibilities of the range of specialist, targeted, preventative and universal provision available to young people
- The progress of individual vulnerable young people is recorded consistently across services and providers (i.e. through CAF/IA/CA)
- Young people's progress is monitored and reviewed consistently by professional practitioners, managers and commissioners.
- Supervision is used as a tool to enable staff to reflect on their practice and seek ways of improving their work with young people
- Feedback from young people and their parents/carers is encouraged and impacts on how provision is delivered
- All practitioners form part of the 'Team around the Child/Young Person/Family' approach

The headings used for the framework are based loosely on the concept of APIR (Assessment, Planning, Implementation, Review). Two additional categories have been added as precursors to assessment, to reflect the need to ensure that those who work with young people have sufficient knowledge of the opportunities available to meet young people’s needs, and to ensure that communication between professionals in preventative, universal, targeted and specialist provision provides a backdrop of positive and mutually respectful professional relationships to smooth the pathways for young people’s transitions.

KNOWLEDGE

While the move to more integrated working has significantly improved the knowledge of potential provision amongst a range of previously unconnected professionals, there are still gaps in knowledge, within both specialist and universal services. The proposed standards seek to establish the ‘architecture’ to enable knowledge transfer.

Standards	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a regularly updated, published directory of the universal and preventative opportunities available to young people, including both directly delivered services and those commissioned from other organisations, as part of Family Service Directory • Staff in specialist and targeted services are aware of the directory and understand the range of opportunities it includes • Staff across services for young people are trained and understand the roles and functions of the range of services available to young people • Each recognised access point for young people (both specialist and universal) is included in relevant directories, and staff have immediate access to the directories in their place of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Service Directory in place and distributed to or accessible by all recognised ‘gateways’ for young people • Entries in the directory include access arrangements for young people with disabilities • Active promotion of directory and information about programmes to organisations/individuals working with vulnerable young people (eg foster carers) • Monitoring process to measure extent of use in each service area • Training package in place • Training records show that staff have undertaken relevant training

COMMUNICATION

There is considerable evidence that the existence of positive professional relationships between those working in different settings with young people eases the process of transition for young people. Where professionals trust each other and can reassure young people that they will receive appropriate care and support, and can readily speak to each other about individual young people, the likelihood of successful transitions is significantly increased. Co-location assists this development, and should be supported by clear inter-agency protocols, such as the agreements between Secondary Schools and Local Service Teams 2009/10.

Standards	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners in universal and preventative settings have easy access to specialist and targeted services through agreed and understood channels, including the Common Request for Involvement/Referral Form • Practitioners and managers from across the range of young people's and adult services actively seek to develop and maintain positive working relationships with each other • Aspects of specialist and targeted services are delivered in universal and preventative settings • Services consistently respond quickly to requests from other services and practitioners for support for vulnerable young people: for all services, a response should be made within 5 working days, unless other statutory requirements are in place • Practitioners and managers share information on young people with whom they are in contact, in accordance with protocols agreed at Children's Trust level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each specialist and targeted service has protocols explaining clear and accessible channels for communication about individual young people • Protocols for interface between agencies are reviewed annually • Request for Involvement/Referral Forms are used regularly and responses monitored • Attendance at multi-disciplinary/agency meetings, Team Around the Child arrangements • Delivery of partnership projects with practitioners from other disciplines • Feedback from partner organisations • Monitoring of implementation of information sharing protocols

ASSESSMENT

Standards	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery staff in universal and preventative settings are aware of a range of behaviours and indicators that can mean that a young person is in need of additional support • At least one frontline worker or first line manager in each universal/preventative setting is trained and confident in using CAF with young people • Those leading open access sessions with young people understand CAF, know where to access support in initiating the CAF process and can introduce assessment as an option for individual young people • All staff and organisations working with young people know how to access Somerset Direct to access support and advice for young people • CAF or other formal assessment is completed for each young person identified as potentially vulnerable, and following an assessment an action plan is agreed • Needs identified through assessment are recorded • Formal assessments carried out by specialist services will include assessment of the young person's transition needs at the end of a planned specialist intervention and an exit strategy for the young person • Assessments for young people with a disability will include consideration of their access to positive activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training records show knowledge of CAF, child protection, disability awareness, factors affecting educational achievement, offending etc • Session recordings show consideration is given to individual young people's needs • Records of CAF and other assessments undertaken • Somerset Direct contact records • Supervision records

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Standards	Evidence
<p>Referrals</p> <p><i>(a) From universal/preventative services to specialist/targeted services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Common Request for Involvement/Referral Form will be used to request involvement from specialist agencies • A designated worker in the universal setting is responsible for supporting the young person and enabling them to access specialist provision. This includes, as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Working with the young person to engage family support ➤ Keeping in contact with the young person while they participate in specialist intervention ➤ Support for the young person in universal settings, including positive activities, during the specialist intervention and once it is completed ➤ Continuous monitoring of progress using CAF Outcome Evaluation Plan, in conjunction with the Lead Professional <p><i>(b) From specialist/targeted services to universal/preventative settings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Practitioner/Lead Professional established clear action plan with review date and exit strategy • Specialist practitioner/Lead professional works with young person on exit strategy from specialist programme to identify interests, needs for support etc • Specialist Practitioner/Lead Professional uses the Family Services Directory and their network of contacts in universal settings to identify relevant opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Common Request for Involvement/Referral Form is monitored • Clear guidance for role of designated support worker in place • Supervision records • CAF Outcome Evaluation Forms • Feedback from young people/ parents/ carers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans for exit strategies • Uptake of relevant financial assistance • Supervision records • Feedback from young people/ parents/ carers

Standards	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Practitioner/Lead Professional uses agreed protocols for referral, including the Common Request for Involvement/Referral Form and accompanies young person to meet practitioner in universal provision and see the setting • Specialist Practitioner/Lead Professional accesses appropriate sources of financial support (eg Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy) to enable young person to take part in agreed positive activities, or agrees a mechanism for this with the provider <p><i>Ongoing support for vulnerable young people in universal/preventative settings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised universal/preventative providers have mechanisms to support vulnerable young people to engage with opportunities that will raise aspirations and provide challenges in supportive environments • Recognised universal/preventative providers support young people to access financial support to enable them to take part in such opportunities • Recognised universal/preventative providers monitor the progress of vulnerable young people using the CAF Outcome Evaluation Form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for provision of support to vulnerable young people in place in each setting • Uptake of relevant financial assistance • CAF Outcome Evaluation Forms • Feedback from young people /parents /carers • Review of young people's progress through staff supervision notes • CAF Audit process

REVIEW

Standards	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed timescales for CAF or other review processes will be adhered to • Review at agreed intervals between Support Worker/Lead Professional and young person • Regular review through supervision of support workers • Revised 'offer' to young person based on changing circumstances and needs • Review of achievement of National Indicators for young people • Feedback from young people and their parents/carers is gathered regularly and acted upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAF Outcome Evaluation forms • Supervision records • Reductions in re-offending rates, exclusions etc • Feedback from young people and parents/carers has an impact on how service is

Standards	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns highlighted through review process are acted upon • Monitoring Group for IYSS reviews arrangements for transitions against these standards, seeking continuous improvement 	<p>delivered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review reports to Monitoring Group for IYSS

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