

'YOUTH LINKS'

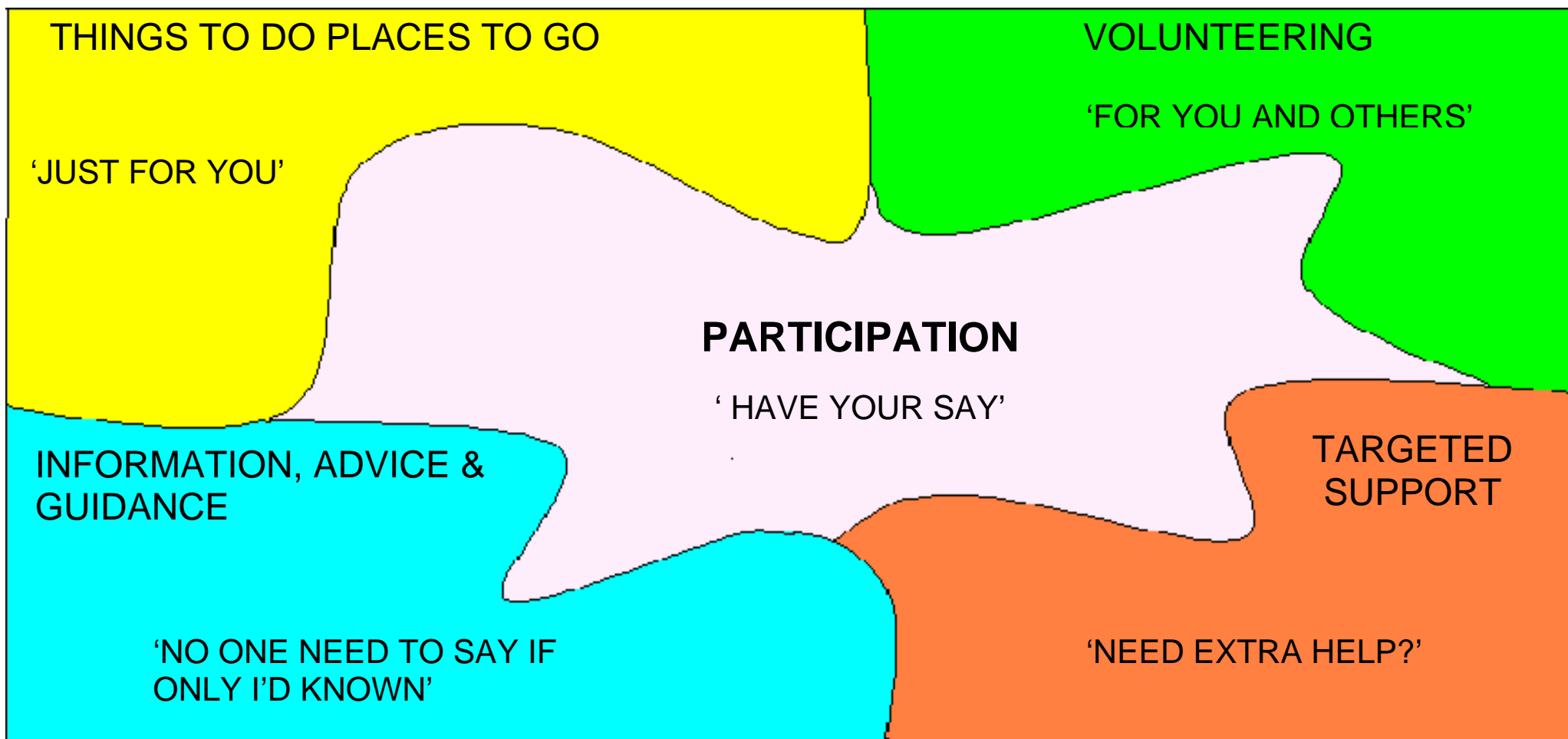
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NEWCASTLE'S INTEGRATED YOUTH SUPPORT STRATEGY

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BACKGROUND PICTURE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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‘Youth Links’ forms part of the overall plans to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families in the city. It sits underneath the Newcastle Plan for Children and Young People and shares the vision and priorities for change that are outlined in the Plan:

Vision:

That children and young people should:

Be Healthy: enjoy the best physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and development so that they feel good about themselves and their lives.

Be Safe: be safe and protected from harm within their families, communities and the City as a whole.

Enjoy and Achieve: realise their ambition and enjoy and achieve in all areas of their life.

Make a Positive Contribution: take an active part in positive opportunities presented in all areas and stages of their life and the life of the community and be valued for their contributions.

Achieve Economic Well-Being: be actively protected from discrimination in order to live free from poverty and hardship.

Priorities for Change in Newcastle:

- To reduce the high rate of teenage pregnancies
- To reduce obesity in children under 11 years of age - Think we should take this one out – it’s for under 11’s
- To raise levels of educational achievement across all key stages
- To develop a comprehensive early intervention strategy to support parents, carers and families.
- To reduce the number of children looked after in Newcastle.

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‘Youth Links’ Core Commitments:

Youth Links will be the strategy which sets out how we will achieve the four parts of our work together:

- Things to do and places to go
- Information, advice and guidance
- Volunteering
- Targeted youth support

It will do this by meeting the Youth Offer agreed with young people in the city. Agencies and professionals have been working with groups and individual young people to find out what they want Newcastle to be like as a city to grow up and live in. As part of this work over the summer of 2009 we identified with young people what they wanted to receive as a part of this ‘Youth Offer, which a group of young people then re-wrote in their own words in February 2010 (in bold type below):

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|---|--|
| • Find out about what’s available for you. | ‘Know what’s going on’ |
| • Take part in decision making that makes a real difference. | ‘Come along and get heard, but there’s a difference, actions will be made’ |
| • Access high quality support services when you need them. | ‘Get the best help when you need it’ |
| • Take part in quality opportunities to help the community and be a leader. | ‘Take part and lead the way!’ |
| • Have fun in a safe environment. | ‘To have a good time you have to be safe but most of all you have to feel safe’ |
| • Have space and time to spend with your friends. | ‘Make new friends and spend time together’ |
| • Get good information about work and education, to help you achieve your full potential. | ‘Know what you need to succeed and achieve all you can’ |
| • Get respect and fair treatment no matter who you are: | ‘Treat everyone fairly, we are all equal’ |

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If you wish to explore any of the plans in place in Newcastle in more detail please go to the hyperlink page at the back of this document.

What is an Integrated Youth Support Strategy?

In terms of an Integrated Youth Support Strategy for Newcastle, this means that we bring together all partners involved in the delivery of services for young people, including young people and their parents, to plan and deliver their work in co-operation and collaboration with each other. This helps us to make sure that all the resources we have to deliver services to young people in Newcastle are used effectively to provide the highest quality services without duplication. By including young people in the design of services we will make sure that resources are used to provide what young people want in ways and at places that they are happy with.

The strategy is about showing how we in Newcastle can all work together to make sure all services for young people and their parents are easy to find out about, easy to contact, easy to get involved with, easy to understand and offer a mix of opportunities and challenges.

The Integrated Youth Strategy for Newcastle brings all partners together to plan, design and deliver a full range of services with and for all young people in the City aged 11 to 25, taking into account their individual and collective needs and the uniqueness of the communities in which they live.

Many documents underpin this strategy including government legislation and guidance as well as other local assessments of needs and strategies. If you would be interested in finding out more about these you can access them through the Newcastle City Council website in the Children’s Services section.

Why do we need ‘Youth Links’?

- Some young people and their parents do not have their needs fully met.
- Services for young people and their parents are more effective when we all work together more closely.
- More can be done to help prevent young people from drifting into crime.
- More can be done to ensure that young people and their parents are supported to make the right decisions at the right time, including supporting them to achieve economic wellbeing and prevent them from experiencing poverty.
- More can be done to involve young people and their parents in the planning and design of services to make sure that they really are what young people want and need.

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- Imaginative ways of getting in touch with young people can be used more widely.
- Too many young people do not stay in education, employment or training when they leave school.
- Not all young people and their parents know what is available or how to access services.

We want services and service users in Newcastle to work together on all these areas to ensure that our services meet the needs of all young people in the city. We want all young people to know how to find out about services and be pleased with the way they are delivered.

What must ‘Youth Links’ include?

Government policy and guidance says that an Integrated Youth Support Strategy needs to include information about how four key areas of work for young people will be delivered. These are:

- **“Things to do and Places to go”** This means that we will engage young people in positive activities and get them involved in shaping the services they receive. Our aim is that young people in Newcastle will have a wide variety of enjoyable and educational activities open to them that will support them to develop as individuals and members of their community. These activities may be accredited and will be offered by a variety of reliable, high quality and safe providers.
- **“Information, Advice and Guidance”** This means that we will provide information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about all parts of their lives. No one organisation or individual is qualified to offer impartial information, advice and guidance on all issues that young people face. Through the Family Information Service website and directory we will make sure that young people, their parents, carers and professionals working with them are able to find out about the best agency or person to offer information, advice and guidance on a particular issue. Our ambition for Newcastle is that no young person, parent, carer or professional should need to say “If only I’d known.”
- **“Volunteering”** This means that we will encourage and support more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities. Young people will be supported to volunteer in areas of interest to them by specialist organisations with a proven track record in managing volunteering schemes. As 65% of young people have said that they would volunteer if their efforts were recognised in some way we will make it a priority to explore existing and new ways of giving recognition and accreditation to young volunteers.
- **“Targeted Youth Support”** This means that we will provide better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious difficulties or gets into trouble. We aim to make sure that the early intervention and effective prevention strategies that we put in place will mean that there are fewer young people who will need these targeted services. However there will always be some young people who need extra support

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at particularly difficult times of their lives. Our ambition for Newcastle is that we will be able to identify young people facing difficulties as early as possible and have one named Lead Professional to support them through their issues and enable them to overcome them and go on to achieve their full potential. We will make sure that young people get extra help when they need it.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also gives Local Authorities a new strategic role including:

- duties to promote choice, diversity, high standards and the fulfilment of potential for every child
- responsibility for making sure young people have a range of exciting things to do in their spare time
- provide positive activities for young people

‘Links’ will help the Local Authority work effectively with all partners to ensure that it fulfils these duties.

What principles do we expect in our work?

All partners who become part of ‘Links’ in Newcastle will be expected to work within the principles set out below:

1. Make sure that their work is based on the active participation of young people, parents, carers and those who provide services.
2. Increase the impact of early intervention and effective prevention making sure that fewer young people need specialist or crisis services. This includes providing support to parents and carers.
3. Work within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Framework and Standards as agreed by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
4. Actively work to raise the aspirations, attainment and achievements of young people including making their families aware of the full range of opportunities open to them.
5. Include everyone who needs, receives and delivers services in Newcastle, respecting their dignity and diversity.
6. Reach out to excluded, hard to hear and vulnerable individuals and groups to make sure that they are able to access services fully.
7. Promote effective joint working to raise the aspirations of young people and their families in Newcastle.
8. Include continual review so that good practice can be shared, impact maximised and areas for improvement addressed.
9. Make sure that resources are used to improve outcomes for young people and are deployed to make sure that the best value for money is achieved.

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How will we make ‘Youth Links’ happen?

- Valuing young people and making sure that we respond to the views they express.
- Maintain ongoing discussions with young people to ensure that the way practitioners work with them and the way services are delivered meet their needs and ambitions.
- Maintain an open and honest consultation and participation process with young people and respect their right to be involved in making the decisions that affect them.
- Promote respect between groups of young people and the adults and services with which they work.
- Have high but achievable expectations of and aspirations for young people and work with them to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Promote the concepts of opportunity, progression, challenge and support for young people in all that we do.
- Working together to remove barriers to inclusion for all young people.
- Actively promote the right of all young people to gain access to the highest quality information, advice, opportunities and support available to them.
- Make sure that there is a comprehensive annual local offer of services publicised in a variety of ways to all young people.
- Make sure that all professionals working with young people are:
 - Qualified to an appropriate level
 - Have regular Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks
 - Have regular management and supervision to make sure that their work is of a high standard
 - Understand and promote the Participation work with young people
 - Fully work towards the respect and inclusion strategies and principles adopted in Newcastle
- Make sure that where a young person has need of extra help and targeted support that there is a single lead professional who takes responsibility of working with the young person and their family and manages all the support that the young person wants and needs.

How will ‘Youth Links’ be managed?

If we are going to develop a truly Integrated Youth Support Strategy for Newcastle it is essential that all partners are valued equally and have the opportunity to have a say in how services are shaped and developed.

In the first instance we have formed a ‘Youth Links’ Board. All members will have equal status in the group and will include young people. This means that we will be able to get a balanced and honest view on the suitability of current

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services and have all partners involved in planning future provision. In this way we will make sure that no one organisation can dominate the way that services are planned, designed and delivered in Newcastle.

There will be an annual delivery plan that will make sure that the Annual Local Offer of Services is delivered, as promised, to all young people. The delivery plan will state exactly how integrated youth services will work to improve outcomes for young people in Newcastle and how local and national targets will be met.

The progress made towards delivering the strategy and services within it will be reported on a quarterly basis to the ‘Youth Links’ Board and the progress towards national and local targets will be reported to this group and the Children and Young People’s Trust Board. If there is concern about progress in any area then a remedial action plan will be put into place to supplement the actions already outlined in the delivery plan.

What do we want young people in Newcastle to experience?

- Young people will know that they are valued and respected as citizens of Newcastle.
- Access to an easy to use website where everyone can find out about all the services available for young people both in local areas and city-wide. This website will have links to other useful websites.
- Information material about services available in a variety of formats and languages so that young people who would like to access information in ways other than a website or in a different language from English are able to do so.
- Young people will know that the staff they work with are fully qualified, up to date and competent to deliver services to local and national standards.
- Young people will be fully involved in the planning, design and delivery of new services and in the quality assurance and improvement of existing services.
- Young people will be trained and participate fully in the recruitment and selection of the staff who will be working with them.
- Young people will receive a comprehensive Annual Youth Offer that is well publicised to all young people, parents, carers and professionals.
- Appropriate and timely opportunities and activities that help young people, their parents and carers make informed choices about their future plans for learning and employment.
- An annual event to celebrate the positive contribution that young people in Newcastle have made in the quality of their own lives and the lives of those around them.