

London-wide Code of Practice for Youth Support Workers working in Integrated Youth Support Services

Purpose of the Code

This Code of Practice aims to provide a framework for London-based Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) to inform and assist local policy and practice. It is aimed at all youth workforce¹ practitioners with *non-statutory* roles working in IYSSs and uses the generic term 'Youth Support Worker' to describe these practitioners.

The code sets out the behavioural parameters governing workers with a *voluntary* relationship with young people. It does not attempt to define ethical or professional principles where *statutory or legal functions* apply e.g. YOT workers supervising young people on court orders; education welfare officers' enforcement duties; social workers; teachers. It is assumed that professionals with such statutory roles will be bound by statutory and/or obligatory codes of practice which may, at times, over-ride the principles embodied in this code.

This code of practice then, is intended to primarily include: youth workers (paid and unpaid); Connexions personal advisers; school- and college-based learning mentors; key workers; various youth support roles including substance misuse and drugs rehabilitation, housing, health (including mental health) and emotional well-being; leaving care workers; outdoor sports leaders and other staff who contribute to the young people's workforce in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The code recognises the value of the voluntary nature of the professional relationships between non-statutory youth support workers and young people. It sets out to protect and promote the key ethical and professional principles and maintain the appropriate behaviours upon which excellent practice is based.

The code, finally, aims to provide a handy reference point and guide for IYSSs as national and local policy and practice and new and existing youth support worker roles develop over time.

Introduction

This Code of Practice is based on and draws together principles from two previous key documents:

- Code of Practice for Personal Advisers, Connexions National Service Unit (CSNU), 2003
- Ethical Conduct in Youth Work: a statement of values and principles from The National Youth Agency, 1999, reprinted 2004.

¹ For a Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) definition of the youth workforce including statutory and non-statutory roles view: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/young-workforce-reform/who

The code aims to build on the best of these services; by providing a single updated code for a new IYSS context that Youth Support Workers and their managers may take ownership of.

The code primarily aims to support staff in meeting the aspirations of government strategies *Every Child Matters* (2003) and *Youth Matters* (2005):

Every Child Matters has an overarching aim to make the UK the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. Every child, whatever their background or circumstances, should have the support they need to achieve five key outcomes:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing.

Appendix 1 contains more details of the ECM outcomes

The *Youth Matters* Green Paper, launched In July 2005, set out government proposals designed to improve outcomes for 13- to 19-year-olds. It proposed that young people should have:

- more things to do and places to go in their local area, and more choice and influence over what is available (positive activities)
- more opportunities to volunteer and to make a contribution to their local community
- better information, advice and guidance about issues that matter to them, delivered in the way they want to receive it
- better support when they need extra help to deal with problems.

It also supports a wide range of other related government strategies and targets such as those encapsulated in Public Service Agreement (PSA) 14 (October 2007, revised April 2008). Appendix 2 provides further information on PSA 14.

This code then, aims to contribute to ensuring high quality services by setting out for IYSS Youth Support Workers a professional, ethical framework on which to base their practice. It is intended to be a written point of reference to ensure that practice develops within criteria and standards that may be widely agreed and owned across all the professions constituting and contributing to locally-based Integrated Youth Support Services.

It does not intend to replace or supersede any individual professions or sectors codes of practice, guidance or ethics but to sit alongside these and support practice in an IYSS context.

It should support all staff in their respective professional roles to meet the range and levels of need with which young people approach the services that make up an IYSS. It should assist in the provision of high quality and well informed information, advice, guidance, support, counselling and access to personal development, informal educational and recreational opportunities.

Status of the Code

This is currently a voluntary code, initiated by Central London Connexions in response to calls for assistance from its seven constituent boroughs. It may be considered by borough-based IYSSs as the basis for the professional practice of Youth Support Workers, particularly in light of:

- the devolution of Connexions to local authorities in 2008
- the publication of national Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in 2007
- the development of multi-professional Integrated and Targeted Youth Support Teams from 2008

Integrated Youth Support Services locally

This code and its supporting annexes do not attempt to provide a comprehensive guide to how services should be delivered locally. However, much of the content does refer to national and, where relevant, regional policies and guidance; as well as procedures and practices that local services should have in place in order for Youth Support Workers to operate according to the principles outlined in the code.

All IYSS arrangements will have (or be covered by) local policies concerning such issues as Child Protection/Safeguarding, Referral and Assessment of Needs, Health and Safety, Confidentiality and Information Sharing, Equalities and Diversity. Individual services, voluntary and community and private sector partner organisations and schools and colleges will also have a number of their own procedures and practices covering such issues. How these organisational procedures and practices relate to each other will be a matter for the local IYSS and the organisation to agree via local Partnership Agreements and Protocols. Practitioners should be aware of and follow whatever local arrangements have been agreed.

Local IYSSs are responsible for ensuring that the procedures and protocols referred to within the code and annexes are in place, are in active use and are fully supported by managers. IYSSs may adapt, adopt and/or make reference to and supplement the code and annexes for local use and with localised information as needed.

All managers helping to deliver services within the IYSS, and in particular those who line manage and/or supervise Youth Support Workers, should be aware of the contents of this code and, in particular, any national legislation, policy and guidance on which it is based. They will need to actively support practitioners, ensuring that they have ongoing access to relevant training and continuous professional development to enable them to operate within the principles described.

Eight Key Principles

Youth Support Workers will fulfil a variety of professional roles within an IYSS. These should be carried out according to the following ethical and professional principles. Youth Support Workers must:

- work in the best interests of young people; promoting and ensuring their welfare and safety and placing young people's needs and interests before their own values and beliefs.
- value and treat young people with respect; working to establish and maintain

their trust and providing an appropriate and agreed level of confidentiality.

- respect and promote the rights of young people to make their own decisions and choices, when working directly with young people and/or with other organisations on their behalf; unless this seriously threatens the welfare or interests of the young person, practitioner or others.
- contribute to the promotion of social justice for young people through promoting equality of opportunities; respecting and encouraging respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and cultures and challenging discrimination.
- recognise the need to be accountable to young people; their parents and carers; employers, partners and funders; while recognising these accountabilities may be in conflict. Where appropriate and possible, practitioners should engage parents, carers and families in supporting young people and upholding their trust in the services offered.
- uphold the integrity of their profession at all times; in particular recognising the boundaries between personal and professional life in their relationships with young people.
- be responsible for reflecting on their own professional practice and for taking steps to develop, maintain, improve and update their knowledge, skills and competences so they are able to continually deliver a quality service.
- work towards and contribute to continual improvement in their organisations and IYSS through sharing of learning and best practice and implementation and regular review of these principles

Appendix 3 maps the eight principles of the code against the five ECM outcomes where relevant.

Code of Practice

1. Youth Support Workers must work in the best interests of young people; promoting and ensuring their welfare and safety and placing young people's needs and interests before their own values and beliefs.

This includes:

- Adhering to legislation and codes of practice for preventing the abuse of trust and ensuring young people's welfare and safety is protected at all times
- Taking responsibility for assessing risk and managing the safety of any work and activities involving young people; ensuring a balance between avoiding risk and encouraging participation in challenging educational and recreational activities
- Ensuring that their own actions as a youth practitioner are in accordance with the law; warning their employers and/or the appropriate authority if any actions, activities or policies may be unlawful, dangerous or seriously harmful to young people
- Valuing young people and acting in a way that does not negatively discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, gender, ability or sexual

orientation or any other factor such as pregnancy, refugee status etc

- Working with young people individually and in groups as appropriate to identify, explore and assess their needs; offering impartial information, advice, guidance and support and personal development, informal educational and recreational opportunities as appropriate to professional role
- Signposting or referring young people to other opportunities and services to meet their needs as appropriate.
- Providing a holistic service that deals with the whole range of a young person's needs as relevant to their professional role
- Helping, supporting and advising young people who face challenges that may affect their ability to take part in formal and informal learning, work or leisure opportunities
- Helping to raise young people's aspirations through challenging assumptions, stereotypes and low expectations

(ref: [Annex 1 - Child Protection and Preventing the Abuse of Trust](#))

2. Youth Support Workers must value and treat young people with respect; working to establish and maintain their trust and providing an agreed and appropriate level of confidentiality.

This includes:

- Developing open, honest and, where appropriate, sustained professional relationships with young people based on mutual trust
- Acting as responsible adults in all their work with young people, treating them with honesty and respect
- Empowering young people, enabling them to make choices in relation to learning and development opportunities
- Offering a confidential service within the law and, where applicable, local confidentiality agreements and/or agreed operating practices in own or partner/host organisations
- Explaining the limits of confidentiality and reporting to the appropriate authorities any suspicions relating to a young person being at risk of serious harm or danger
- Recognising that confidential information may only be used for the purpose for which it is entrusted unless there are clear grounds to override the young person's consent to share the information
- Collecting, storing, managing, sharing and disposing of information effectively, with young people's full involvement; adhering to the Data Protection Act and local IYSS information sharing processes and protocols

(ref: [Annex 2 – Confidentiality and Information Sharing](#))

- 3. Youth Support Workers must respect and promote the rights of young people to make their own decisions and choices and participate in decisions that affect them, both when working directly with young people and/or with other organisations on their behalf; unless this seriously threatens the welfare or interests of the young person, practitioner or others.**

This includes:

- Respecting young people's own views, choices and decisions and offering learning opportunities for young people to develop their capacities and confidence in making decisions and choices through participation in decision-making bodies and planning their own activities
- Providing information and raising young people's awareness of the range of decisions and choices open to them; offering opportunities for discussion on the implications of particular choices and decisions in their lives generally and in relation to participation in relevant services and activities
- Promoting the rights of young people, advocating on their behalf where appropriate and ensuring there is a coherent approach to their support
- Effectively collaborating with a network of public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations, working to ensure young people have access to the services and support they need
- Acting professionally in all dealings with other organisations, adhering to agreed protocols and procedures when working from shared premises or as part of multi-agency and multi-professional teams

For more information, refer to local active involvement or participation policies and strategies

- 4. Youth Support Workers must contribute to the promotion of social justice for young people through promoting equality of opportunities; respecting and encouraging respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and cultures, challenging discrimination and promoting community cohesion in all work with young people.**

This includes:

- Promoting just and fair behaviour, and challenging discriminatory actions and attitudes on the part of young people, colleagues and others
- Encouraging young people to respect and value difference and diversity, particularly in the context of a multi-cultural society
- Drawing attention to unjust policies and practices and actively seeking to change them
- Promoting the participation of all young people, and particularly those who have traditionally been discriminated against, in IYSS services, in public structures and in society generally
- Encouraging young people and others to work together collectively on issues of common concern

(ref: [Annex 3 – Equal Opportunities and Community Cohesion](#))

- 5. Youth Support Workers must recognise the need to be accountable to young people; their parents and carers; employers, partners and funders; while recognising these accountabilities may be in conflict. Where appropriate and possible, practitioners should engage parents, carers and families in supporting young people and upholding their trust in the services offered.**

This includes:

- Ensuring that resources under the practitioners' control are distributed fairly, according to transparent criteria for which practitioners are accountable and that work undertaken is as effective as possible
- Encouraging young people to actively involve parents, carers and families in helping them to overcome barriers to inclusion and achievement
- Working with parents, carers and families – with the consent of the young person - to support young people in accessing formal and informal learning, personal development and other opportunities
- Promoting young people's use of relevant services to parents, carers and families, taking account of their views and gaining and maintaining their trust in the service
- Recognising that accountabilities to young people; their parents, carers and families and other professionals may conflict and taking responsibility for seeking appropriate advice and making decisions in cases of conflict

For more information refer to: Every Parent Matters
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/parents/

- 6. Youth Support Workers must uphold the integrity of their own profession at all times; in particular recognising the boundaries between personal and professional life in their relationships with young people.**

This includes:

- Acting to maintain the trust placed in them by young people, parents, carers, families and other organisations
- Not putting young people or themselves at unnecessary risk
- Recognising the tensions between developing supportive and caring relationships with young people and maintaining an appropriate professional distance
- Taking care not to develop close personal relationships and not engaging or seeking to engage in unprofessional relationships with young people with whom they are working
- Not engaging in work-related activities for personal gain or accepting gifts that may compromise the professional integrity of the work and avoiding the

promotion of activities that are illegal or harmful to young people or their professional relationships with young people

- Demonstrating awareness of the impact of their actions and not acting in a manner that would undermine the integrity of their profession or call into question their suitability to fulfil their role, including behaviour outside of work
- Working to promote the integrity of their service with partners and other organisations within and outside of the local IYSS
- Seeking advice from line managers and/or supervisors when conflicts of interest arise that may affect their ability to deliver a professional service.

(ref: [Annex 4 – Health and Safety](#))

7. Youth Support Workers must be responsible for reflecting on their own professional practice and for taking steps to develop, maintain, improve and update their knowledge, skills and competences through continuous professional development so that they are able to continually deliver a quality service.

This includes:

- Continually reviewing and reflecting on their own professional practice
- Practising within their own areas of competence, only undertaking work or taking on responsibilities for which they have the necessary skills, knowledge and support; recognising their limitations and professional boundaries
- Seeking advice from line managers and/or supervisors and referring or signposting to other services as necessary
- Actively seeking feedback from service users, colleagues and line managers on their individual practice and quality of work
- With the support of their employers, managers and peers, recognising when new skills and knowledge are required and seeking out opportunities for continuous professional development and training to continually improve and update skills and knowledge.

(ref: Annex 5: IYSS Youth Support Worker Roles)

- a) [The role of the Personal Adviser](#)
- b) The role of the Youth Worker
- c) The role of the Learning Mentor
- d) The role of the Education Welfare Officer and Attendance Worker
- e) The role of the Youth Justice Worker

8. Youth Support Workers should work towards and contribute to continuous improvement in their organisations and IYSS through sharing of learning and best practice; and implementation, debate and review of these ethical and professional principles

This includes:

- Developing awareness of own personal values and how these relate to the professional and ethical principles embodied in this code
- Developing awareness of the potential for conflict between personal and professional values, as well as between the interests and rights of different individuals and between the ethical principles in this statement
- Recognising the importance of, and engaging in continuous reflection, debate and discussion with colleagues and partners and contributing to the learning of both their own organisation and their local IYSS
- Treating this code of practice as a working document which should be constantly under discussion in their organisations and local IYSS

Appendix 1: Every Child Matters Five Outcomes

Under the Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters requires all services for children and young people to meet five key national outcomes:

1. **Be Healthy:** physically, mentally & emotionally; sexually healthy, healthy lifestyles, choosing not to take illegal drugs
2. **Stay Safe:** from maltreatment, neglect, violence, sexual exploitation; accidental injury & death; bullying & discrimination; crime & anti-social behaviour; have security, stability & be cared for
3. **Enjoy and Achieve:** ready for school, attend & enjoy school; achieve national educational standards; achieve personal & social development & enjoy recreation
4. **Make a positive contribution:** engage in decision-making & support to community & environment; engage in law-abiding & positive behaviour; develop positive relationships & choose not to bully & discriminate; develop self-confidence & successfully deal with life changes & challenges; develop enterprising behaviour
5. **Achieve economic well-being:** engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school; ready for employment; live in decent homes & sustainable communities; access to transport & material goods; live in households free from low income

References:

Every Child Matters: Change for Children, H M Government 2005
Youth Matters (Youth Green Paper), H M Government, 2005

Appendix 2: PSA 14

The PSA 14 Delivery Agreement provides the basis for realising the Government's vision for young people, that they should have access to the right opportunities and support so that they:

- succeed in education and learning
- develop resilience and wider social and emotional skills
- can make a real contribution to their communities and wider society
- are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy
- grow up in a safe and supportive environment.

PSA 14 requires providers of services for young people to work closely together, as in IYSS and TYS arrangements, on the basis that the areas focussed on in the Delivery Agreement are closely related. It measures progress in increasing successful transitions to adulthood. These are contained in two sets of mutually reinforcing and complimentary indicators relating to 1) increased participation and resilience, and 2) tackling negative outcomes. It sets out five measurable indicators under these two to be used to assess progress in increasing the number of young people 'on the path to success'. These are:

1. Increased participation and resilience
 - i) Reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - ii) More participation in Positive Activities
2. Tackling negative outcomes
 - iii) Reduce the proportion of young people frequently using illicit drugs, alcohol or volatile substances
 - iv) Reduce the under-18 conception rate
 - v) Reduce the number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17

Appendix 3: Code of Practice Eight Principles mapped against ECM Five Outcomes

IYSS Code Principles	ECM Outcomes
Work in the best interests of young people; promoting and ensuring their welfare and safety and placing young people's needs and interests before their own values and beliefs	Stay safe Be healthy Enjoy and Achieve
Value and treat young people with respect; working to establish and maintain their trust and providing an appropriate and agreed level of confidentiality	Stay safe
Respect and promote the rights of young people to make their own decisions and choices, when working directly with young people and/or with other organisations on their behalf; unless this seriously threatens the welfare or interests of the young person, practitioner or others	Stay safe Make a positive contribution
Contribute to the promotion of social justice for young people through promoting equality of opportunities; respecting and encouraging respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and cultures and challenging discrimination	Make a positive contribution
Recognise the need to be accountable to young people; their parents and carers; employers, partners and funders; while recognising these accountabilities may be in conflict. Where appropriate and possible, practitioners should engage parents, carers and families in supporting young people and upholding their trust in the services offered	Stay safe
Uphold the integrity of their profession at all times; in particular recognising the boundaries between personal and professional life in their relationships with young people	Stay safe
Be responsible for reflecting on their own professional practice and for taking steps to develop, maintain, improve and update their knowledge, skills and competences so they are able to continually deliver a quality service	
Work towards and contribute to continual improvement in their organisations and IYSS through sharing of learning and best practice and implementation and regular review of these principles	

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Annexes

Annex 1

Child Protection/Safeguarding and Preventing the Abuse of Trust

Relationship between the Youth Practitioner and the young person

Youth Support Workers must recognise that as adults they have a duty of care for young people with whom they are working. Young people can, either within their own activities or those organised by practitioners, be at risk of physical or emotional harm or physical, verbal, sexual or emotional abuse. It is the responsibility of the youth support worker to minimise the risk of harm. This duty of care may, in some circumstances, override other considerations such as confidentiality.

All relationships between Youth Support Workers and young people should be based on trust, honesty and respect. Youth Support Workers should act as responsible adults in all their work with young people. They should have an objective view of a young person's situation and should support young people to seek the best educational and life choices for themselves; offering high quality, impartial and well informed information, advice, guidance, support, counselling and access to personal development, informal educational and recreational opportunities as appropriate to their professional role.

As appropriate to their professional role, Youth Support Workers should clarify the rights and responsibilities of both young people and themselves at the earliest opportunity in their contact with the young person. They should explain their role, including how they can help to address a young person's needs and, if appropriate, how they will broker access to specialist services if required. If they are to take on a Lead Professional role for the young person, the additional responsibilities of this role should be explained.

Youth Support Workers should explain to young people the limitations of their specific professional role and be clear about their own professional boundaries. In most cases, the young person's relationship with the service will be voluntary and they should also explain to the young person their right to refuse services if they want, though it may also be appropriate to explain the implications for the young person of doing so.

If appropriate to the specific service being delivered; responses should be recorded. Practitioners should review this information at periodic intervals in their dealings with young people to ensure they are always clear about the basis on which the service is offered and delivered.

Child Protection/safeguarding

It is the responsibility of local IYSSs to ensure that all Youth Support Workers undergo child protection/safeguarding training, or supply evidence that they have recently undertaken such training. Services must take account of the government's guidance to Children's Trusts and all organisations listed under section 11 of the

Children's Act when planning for the safeguarding of children and young people:

[Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 - Updated March 2007](#) Available at:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00042/>

[Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children - 2006](#)

Issued by the Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families, sets out how all agencies and professionals should work together to promote children and young people's welfare and protect them from abuse and neglect. Available at:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060/

In response to the findings of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, the Department for Children, Schools and Families have also issued a document entitled: '[Safeguarding Children: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)', December 2006. This is also available on the Every Child Matters website at:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00182/>

It is essential that all Youth Support Workers are aware of and comply with the principles set out in these documents. They must also follow any specific child protection/safeguarding procedures and arrangements of their employing agency and/or that have been agreed for the situation and location in which they are working. For example, Practitioners working in schools or colleges must comply with the child protection arrangements of the particular school or college in which they are working and any obligations to report cases of potential abuse to the named child protection/safeguarding officer within the school/college.

IYSSs are required to have written procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse which will most likely be part of their local Children's Trust. Procedures. These procedures should reflect guidance set down by their local Safeguarding Children Board and reflect the guidelines above issued by the Department of Health/DCSF. They should set out the steps that a Practitioner would need to take to bring the allegations to the attention of a designated person or someone with the authority to take them forward e.g. a colleague, or local authority officer and/or school officer with designated responsibility for child protection or safeguarding. Practitioners must follow these procedures when dealing with allegations or concerns surrounding child protection/ safeguarding.

Practitioners working in London services should also be aware of the London Safeguarding Children's Board Child Protection Procedures (3rd edition, 2007) and supplementary guidance:

www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/

In all cases, Youth Support Workers must ensure that any referral to a designated teacher, social care or other appropriate body is confirmed in writing – e.g. if a referral is made by telephone, the Practitioner should send a written confirmation within 48 hours. The Practitioner should also ensure that they have received written

confirmation of receipt. Social care services should acknowledge written referrals within one working day of receiving them, so if they have not replied within three working days, the Practitioner must contact social care services again.

Further information on referral processes can be found in local guidelines and the national guidance, 'Safeguarding Children: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (see web link above).

Preventing Abuse of Trust

All organisations involved with caring for young people or vulnerable adults should have codes of conduct to protect against sexual activity within relationships of trust. These codes of conduct are primarily intended to protect young people and vulnerable adults where a relationship of trust exists between them and an adult who is supporting them.

Youth Support Workers are in a position of trust and should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with young people. Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and young people in their care is inappropriate and a breach of trust. Any sexual activity between a member of staff and a young person under 18 years of age may be a criminal offence:

The offence of 'abuse of a position of trust' was originally set out in the **Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000**. Sections 3 and 4 of the Act created a new offence of abuse of trust, making it an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have sexual intercourse or engage in other sexual activity with a person under that age where they are in a position of trust in relation to the younger person. This law aims to protect 16 and 17 year olds who are not protected by other child sex offences.

The Act sets out a series of occupations to which the abuse of a position of trust laws apply:

- Institutions looking after young people who are detained under a court order or enactment, such as a Young Offenders Institution
- Accommodation provided by local authorities and voluntary organisations under statutory provision
- Hospitals, independent clinics, care homes, residential care homes, private hospitals, community homes, voluntary homes, children's homes and residential family centres
- Educational institutions

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 re-enacts and extends the abuse of position of trust offences set out in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000. It introduces additional occupations to which the position of trust laws apply. These cover people who look after young people under 18 in the following ways:

- Looking after them on an individual basis by providing services under the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This includes Connexions Personal Advisers
- Regularly having unsupervised contact with them as part of local authority provision, accommodation to young people who are in need, under police protection or detention, or on remand
- Having regular, unsupervised contact with them as someone who regularly reports to a court on matters of their welfare
- Looking after them on an individual basis e.g. as a Personal Adviser appointed under relevant legislation, such as when young people leave local authority care.

- Looking after them in an official capacity on a regular basis when they are subject to a care order, supervision order, or education supervision order
- Acting as their guardian as set out in the Children Act 1989, the Adoption Rules 1984 and the Family Proceedings Rule 1991
- Looking after them on an individual basis after their release from detention or in pursuance of a court order. This includes Youth Offending Teams and treatment providers.

The Act's provisions meant that, subject to a number of limited definitions, it would be a criminal offence for a person in a position of trust to engage in any sexual activity with a person aged under 18 with whom they have a relationship of trust, irrespective of the age of consent, *even if the basis for their relationship is considered consensual*.

A relationship of trust exists where a member of staff or volunteer is in a position of power or influence over a young person by virtue of the work or nature of the activity being undertaken.

Youth Support Workers should ensure that their relationships with young people are appropriate to the age and gender of the young people, and take care that their own language or behaviour does not give rise to speculation as to their intentions etc and ensure that they do not put themselves in a situation where unfounded allegations could be made.

If situations occur in which young people declare attractions or display 'attention-seeking behaviour' toward a practitioner, the practitioner should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately, but ensure that their own behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. In these circumstances, the member of staff should also ensure that a senior colleague is aware of the situation.

Sources for this section and useful guidance available at:

Home Office public information booklet explaining Sexual Offences Act 2003:
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/children-safer-fr-sex-crime?view=Binary

Home Office Guidance on working within the Sexual Offences Act 2003:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/6674/care-workers.pdf

Office of Public Sector Information, Sexual Offences Act 2003 at:
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/ukpga_20030042_en_1

Teacher net – explanation of the legislation:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/childprotection/usefulinformation/abuseoftrust/

NSPCC policy position on legislation:
www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/policyandpublicaffairs/policysummaries/AbuseOfTrust_wdf61907.pdf

Local Government Employers' Guidance for teachers, education staff and volunteers on preventing abuse of trust, 2002; based on Home Office Guidance, 'Caring for young people and the vulnerable?', October 1999:
www.lge.gov.uk/lge/aio/51013

Lancashire LEA Child Protection Service, 2004 Child Protection Information Pack 2004, section on abuse of trust including accessible, clear information on specific offences:

www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/viewdoc.asp?id=33265

Adult Protection

Youth Support Workers also need to be aware of their responsibilities towards vulnerable adults who may access a range of services or organisations within an IYSS e.g. Personal Advisers And Youth Workers are likely to come into contact with young adults up to 25 with Special Educational Needs or Learning Difficulties or Disabilities who are likely to be very vulnerable; many Youth Support Workers may encounter vulnerable adults who are parents or carers of young people they are in contact with.

What age does 'adult' start?

An adult is someone over the age of 18 but local procedures may include young people under the age of 18 who are married.

Which adults are 'vulnerable'?

"No Secrets" (March 2000) is a report issued by the Home Office and Department of Health which offers guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse.

"No Secrets" defines a vulnerable adult as:

- a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and
- who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

As a result of No Secrets', the ADSS (Association of Directors of Social Services) developed a set of national standards, published in October 2005, **'Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for Good Practice and Outcomes in Adult Protection Work'**. Available at:

www.elderabuse.org.uk/Useful%20downloads/ADSS/SAFEGUARDING%20ADULTS.pdf

The Government's White Paper, 'Modernising Social Services', published at the end of 1998, signalled the intention to provide better protection for individuals needing care and support. This was taken up by the Care Standards Act 2000.

Office of Public Sector Information, Explanatory notes to the Care Standards Act available at: www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/en/ukpgaen_20000014_en_1.htm

All Local Authorities have subsequently developed their own vulnerable adult protection policies and procedures, many now having established multi-agency local 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Partnerships and/or Boards, or other multi-agency arrangements. Youth Support Workers should ensure they are aware of their own local policies and procedures as relevant to their roles.

'Speaking Up for Justice', the government's 1998 report on the treatment of vulnerable or intimidated witnesses in the criminal justice system also led to a commitment to provide greater protection to victims and witnesses in court cases including children, young people and vulnerable adults. Further information available at:

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/victims30.htm

In 2008, the government began a national consultation exercise, to review the No Secrets guidance, entitled, 'Safeguarding Adults: a consultation on the Review of the 'No Secrets' Guidance' The consultation ended in January 2009 and any recommendations for changes are expected late in 2009.

For information on 'No Secrets' and the review consultation see:
www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_089098

For a useful and short response to the consultation and critique of the guidance which makes the links between child protection and vulnerable adult protection see the NSPCC's response to the 'No Secrets' consultation at:
www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/policyandpublicaffairs/Consultations/2009/SVG_wdf64382.pdf

The PAVA (Practitioner Alliance against Abuse of Vulnerable Adults) website also contains helpful information: www.pavauk.org.uk

Annex 2

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Local Protocols

All Services should have in place procedures and protocols for confidentiality and information sharing that, as a minimum, cover the principles outlined below:

Every Child Matters: Seven golden rules for information sharing

1. Remember the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information
2. Be open and honest with the person from the outset
3. Seek advice where in doubt
4. Share with consent where appropriate and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share (unless there is sufficient need to override the lack of consent)
5. Always consider the safety and well-being of the person and others
6. Ensure information is accurate and up to date, necessary, shared with the appropriate people, in a timely fashion and shared securely
7. Record the reasons for the decision – whether it is to share or not.

Available in 'Information sharing: Posters.pdf' at:
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00340/

All Youth Support Workers should have access to the relevant training, information and supervision to enable them to provide confidentiality in the services they deliver and settings in which they deliver them. They should understand and be able to work with the key issues and tensions between confidentiality, consent and information sharing and to confidently deal with situations that may arise. IYSSs should ensure that robust supervision and line management arrangements are in place so that Youth Support Workers are able to quickly seek support when dealing with difficult or sensitive cases. In all cases, the safety and welfare of the young person is of primary importance.

IYSSs will have local confidentiality and information sharing policies in place and/or these will form part of the local Children's Trust policies. All local policies should be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998 and other relevant legislation summarised in the Every Child Matters guidance document: '**Information sharing: Further guidance on legal issues**', February 2009 (N.B. supersedes the previous 2006 guidance). Available at:

Policies should also be in line with the National Quality Standards on Young People's Information Advice and Guidance (e.g. Standard 2.5 information, advice and guidance is provided confidentially and in appropriate settings).

Standards available at:

www.iagworkforce.co.uk/site/iag/content/securing-quality/quality-standards

Confidentiality

As a fundamental principle, IYSSs should offer confidential services to young people with information only being disclosed with the young person's consent or where there are legal requirements to do so.

The boundaries of confidentiality for each Youth Practitioner in a service is that information is only passed to somebody who is authorised to receive it from someone who is authorised to disclose it. The main principle to be observed is that any disclosure of information should be kept to a minimum and on a need to know basis.

Limits to Confidentiality

Young people, including those under 16, generally have the same rights of confidentiality as do adults, as long as they are judged to be 'Fraser competent' (see below). However, Youth Support Workers, working in any IYSS setting cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality in the following circumstances:

- where child protection/safeguarding issues are involved
- where there is a threat of significant harm to children and young people or serious harm to adults e.g. a threat to someone's life
- where the young person needs urgent medical treatment; and/or
- where potential or actual serious criminal offences are involved

Limits to confidentiality should be made clear to young people at the earliest opportunity in the Practitioner's relationship with the young person and where confidentiality has to be broken, the Practitioner should seek to ensure that the young person is informed first or as soon as possible afterwards.

Parents/Carers

Youth Support Workers, as appropriate to their specific role, should encourage young people to discuss any support or participation in IYSS services and activities with their parents/carers, but must respect the right of the young person not to do so. If the young person gives consent, and, where appropriate to their professional role, Practitioners should be proactive in involving parents/carers, encouraging them to take an interest in or, where appropriate, become actively involved in any actions that are agreed with the young person.

Neither the IYSS as whole, individual service, organisation or practitioner are obliged to notify parents that their child is actively involved with IYSS services. The exception to this may be if a Personal Adviser is working with a young person in a school where it has been agreed that the school's confidentiality policy is followed, which may give the parents the right to know this information. Local partnership arrangements should make this clear.

The Every Child Matters publication, **Every Parent Matters, March 2007** provides further guidance on national policy in this area. Available at:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00219/

Information Sharing

IYSSs have been developed in order to ensure services are joined up, work more effectively and are more accessible to young people; ultimately to ensure the best possible chances of achieving their potential in each of the five ECM outcomes. In order to do so children, young people and their families should be at the centre of any work undertaken and services delivered in ways that are needed and wanted.

Sharing information is vital for to achieving these aims, in particular for early intervention to ensure that children and young people with additional needs get the services they require. It is also essential to protect children and young people from suffering harm from abuse or neglect and to prevent them from offending.

The enquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié highlighted significant shortfalls in the practice and process of sharing information between agencies which led to the Children Act 2004 and Every Child Matters framework. This recommended that systems were put in place in every local authority area to ensure that information about children and young people can be shared appropriately within and between agencies and that it is more easily transferred across local authority boundaries.

In order to do this it may be necessary for Youth Support Workers to seek detailed information from young people and to share this information with other agencies that are working with them. Practitioners must ensure that they adhere to the information sharing protocols and agreements agreed by their local IYSS. These protocols will cover both the recording and sharing of information within the IYSS and with other agencies or organisations outside of it e.g. in neighbouring boroughs.

Under the Data Protection Act, information can be shared with others as long as the young person has given their informed consent or there are legal requirements to do so.

Consent

Youth Support Workers should equip young people with the information that they need to give their informed consent to the provision of services within the IYSS and to the recording and sharing of information between services where necessary. They should use clear and understandable language to explain to young people:

- why they want to record information;
- how and why this information will be used;
- what information will be shared with whom; and
- any limits to the sharing of information.

Practitioners should explain the time frame covered by the consent and review it regularly. They should explain that young people have a right to withdraw consent, informing them how to do so and what the consequences of such action will be. They should also ensure that young people fully understand the potential consequences of not giving their consent – e.g. the need to ‘tell their story’ again or be re-assessed by each professional they come into contact with etc.

It is good practice to incorporate a statement that shows consent has been explained to the young person and that they understand what this means. Consent should be explicit and informed, and recorded according to local protocols.

Guidance from ECM and the Information Commissioner (who is responsible for upholding the Data Protection Act) states that any person, who has the capacity to

understand and make their own decisions, may give (or refuse) consent to sharing.

Young people over 12 are generally deemed old enough to be able to make their own decisions about their information, unless there is a reason to suggest otherwise. Younger children may also have sufficient understanding. People aged 16 and over are presumed, in law, to have the capacity to give or withhold their consent to the sharing of confidential information.

Practitioners need to assess whether a particular person on a particular occasion has sufficient understanding to consent, or to refuse consent, to the sharing of information. They will need to use their professional judgement to decide if a young person is competent to make such decisions in line with the 'Fraser Guidelines'. These guidelines were laid down in a court case which concerned contraceptive advice and treatment, but the principle can be extended to other situations.

Broadly speaking, the Practitioner needs to be satisfied that the young person fully understands the choices they are making and what the potential consequences may be. ECM guidance states that a child has sufficient understanding if they can:

- Understand the question being asked of them
- Have a reasonable understanding of:
 - what information might be shared
 - reasons for sharing the information
 - implications of sharing/not sharing the information
- Appreciate and consider alternative courses of action
- Weigh up one aspect of the situation against another
- Express a clear personal view on the matter
- Keep reasonable consistency in their views

Third Party Information

A young person may disclose information about a third party that is not relevant to their own learning and development. Youth Support Workers should not pursue such information unless there is a risk to life or there are Child Protection/safeguarding concerns including if there is suspected actual or potential criminal activity. Information about third parties should not be recorded in any records kept about the young person.

Sex and relationship guidance

Lack of confidentiality is one of the main reasons why young people fail to seek appropriate advice about sensitive issues. Young people need to be able to talk to a trusted adult about sex and relationship issues. Although it is desirable that this person is their parent or carer, this is not always possible. The law enables Youth Support Workers to respect young people's rights to confidentiality when discussing sex and relationship issues. A disclosure of under-age sex is not, of itself a reason to break confidentiality but Practitioners should always bear child protection issues in mind.

If a young person is contemplating sexual activity, or is known to be sexually active, then the Practitioner should give full, impartial advice and support that takes into account the young person's circumstances, includes full information on contraception services and allows the young person to make fully informed decisions. In addition, if a young person under the age of 16 years, is having or contemplating having sexual intercourse, the Practitioner should also take steps to ensure that:

- wherever possible, the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer; and
- any child protection issues are addressed.

For children/young people under 13, the Sexual Offences Act sets out important new laws to provide the extra protection they need from sexual abuse, and set the maximum penalties for abusers. These laws apply to children who have not yet reached their 13th birthday i.e. those who are aged 12 and under. The law now makes it clear that sexual activity with a child under 13 is never acceptable, and that – regardless of the circumstances – children of this age can never legally give their consent. For further guidance refer to the earlier Home Office public information booklet explaining Sexual Offences Act 2003:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/children-safer-fr-sex-crime?view=Binary

Youth Support Workers should follow their IYSS's and individual organisation's policy and code of conduct on giving information and advice about contraception and sexual health matters. When working with young people from a faith background Youth Support Workers should also note the information in Annex 3: Equal Opportunities – Working in the Faith sector.

Useful guidance:

The most up to date national guidance on sex and relationships advice and support for Youth Support Workers can be found in:

Teenage Pregnancy Unit (2004) *Enabling young people to access contraceptive and sexual health advice: Guidance for Youth Support Workers*. Department for Education and Skills.

This document updates and expands on similar guidance to youth workers issued jointly by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit and Connexions in 2001 (*Guidance for youth support workers on providing information and referring young people to contraceptive and sexual health services*). In particular explains the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act (2003) as they affect youth support workers. Similar updated guidance was issued by the Department of Health to health professionals in July 2004 and to social workers by the Department for Education and Skills in October 2004 which are all reflected in this guidance. Available at:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/health/teenagepregnancy/guidance/

'Confidentiality and Young People: Improving teenagers' uptake of sexual and other health advice' (2000). A Toolkit developed by the Royal College of General Practitioners and Brook.

www.rcgp.org.uk/get_involved/committees/medical_ethics_committee/about_the_committee/publications/policy_statements.aspx (search under year 2000)

Brook briefing on good practice - summarises existing guidance in relation to confidentiality, consent and services for young people including sexual health provision and termination of pregnancy. Available at:

www.brook.org.uk/content/M6_1_4_goodpractice.asp

The Teenage Pregnancy Unit web-site has now been archived. Further information can be found on the new Every Child Matters web-site at: www.dcsf.everychildmatters/Healthandwellbeing (teenage pregnancy links)

Substance misuse (drug and alcohol) guidance

Youth Support Workers should ensure that young people who have expressed concern about their own or other's substance misuse are given full and precise details about how to contact the FRANK helpline 0800 776600 and other local services. They should also ensure that:

- young people who report serious substance misuse problems and request help are referred to an appropriate agency for assessment and support
- any child protection issues are addressed
- safeguarding the young person's welfare is paramount.

They should also follow any substance misuse policies and procedures within their employing agency and local IYSS.

Young people and the Police

IYSSs provide opportunities for close working relations with statutory and voluntary organisations. Under the terms of the Children Act 2004, the police will be represented as a partner on the local Children's Trust Partnership and Local Safeguarding Children Boards. As a matter of good practice IYSSs should agree policies covering liaison and information-sharing with the police and agree how they will work together. The police, however, cannot be bound to work within any agreement reached.

There is no legal duty to report an offence to the police or to disclose information that criminal offences have been committed. However, Youth Support Workers working with young people should be careful to avoid anything which could constitute aiding and abetting offences. Good practice would be to ensure that there are close working relations with the local police. Where information is requested by the police this can be given where consent has been obtained or, without consent, where the information requested is likely to prevent a serious crime from being committed or as evidence where a serious crime may have been committed or to prevent harm to individuals and the general public (see limits to confidentiality earlier).

If there is any doubt, Practitioners should seek advice from Line Managers.

Harm Reduction (drugs, weapons, and personal safety of young person)

Most IYSSs will have local weapons and harm reduction policies and guidance in place. (APYCO has produced a short guidance note for assistance of Heads of Service if not. Available at:

www.apyco.org.uk/documents/GuidanceNotes.doc

Youth Support Workers may find themselves faced with situations that involve drugs, weapons or issues of morality. The general principle to be applied is that the focus should be on the young person's safety, on safeguarding welfare and on reducing harm to the general public. Practitioners should follow local policies and procedures and involve senior managers or, where appropriate, specialist organisations – e.g. the Police - in any decision making and preferably prior to any action. If in any doubt they should seek advice and guidance from local IYSS managers on the action to take.

Runaways

The Children Act 1989 provides that parents have 'parental responsibility' for their children until they are 18. If the young person is 16 or 17 parents have limited powers to force them home. Under the age of 16 parents' rights are greater but are not absolute.

New statutory guidance has been developed to help local authorities put better systems in place to support young runaways from both home and care. The new guidance, *Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care*, published in July 2009, replaces *Children Missing from Care and from Home (2002)*. It puts greater emphasis on the importance of young runaways being offered a return interview (whether to home or care) and stresses the importance of

information sharing and the use of common assessment and appropriate care planning. It also explains the need for a named person to have responsibility at local level and stresses multi-agency responses, within and across local authority borders, including strong working relationships with the police and voluntary sector.

The guidance requires local and regional Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols to be in place (referred to in the guidance as RMFHC protocols) especially for out-of-hours referrals. It also addresses the recommended characteristics of, and standards for, provision of effective emergency accommodation. Available at:

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/.../youngrunaways/

IYSSs should have policies in place, consistent with the new statutory guidance and their local borough's safeguarding board's policy on the help and support that can be offered to young people who have run away from home and care. Policies should state in what circumstances they will disclose information against the young person's wishes to parents, police and other agencies. In general practitioners should seek to involve parents/carers, but the primary concern should be to ensure and safeguard the young person's welfare and safety.

Practitioners may have to negotiate with parents/ carers and other professionals and may need to refer on to external organisations outside of the IYSS e.g. social care, police, family mediation services. They will need to be sensitive to the young person's needs but ensure that support mechanisms are in place and where appropriate, services informed.

For national guidance on information sharing follow the links below:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00340/>

HM Government Information Sharing Guidance (October 2008)
Suite of materials including guidance for practitioners and managers; a pocket guide; credit card sized quick reference guide; posters; case examples; further guidance on legal issues; endorsements and statements.

- Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers
- Information Sharing: Pocket guide
- Information sharing: Case examples
- Information sharing: Further guidance on legal issues (Feb 2009)
- Information Sharing: Quick reference guide.pdf

Annex 3

Equal Opportunities and Community Cohesion

One of the key principles forming the basis of Youth Matters (DfES, 2005) is extending 'opportunity for all' and equality of opportunity. Youth Matters Next Steps (DfES, 2006) lists as one of its proposals in its Implementation Plan:

Equal Access and Opportunity

- Make available resources to address the needs of young people at particular risk of exclusion, including disabled young people, lesbian, gay and bisexual young people, Black and minority ethnic groups and those in rural areas
- Issue good practice material on improving transport for young people
- Disability Discrimination Act: a new Duty on all Public Authorities comes into force December 2006
- ODPM to re-issue the Homelessness Code of Guidance to local authorities on their duties under the homelessness legislation, including addressing the needs of families with young people

Equality of opportunity is also central to the national Quality Standards for Young People's IAG launched by DCSF in October 2007 and effective from April 2008. Standard 5 (page 10) states:

Information, advice and guidance services promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes

- 5.1 services reach all young people in the local community, including disadvantaged and marginalised groups
- 5.2 information, advice and guidance services are personalised to meet the needs of individual young people
- 5.3 young people facing barriers to access to learning, training and employment are given the help that they need to overcome these barriers
- 5.4 services are sensitive to the faith, cultural, and family background that people come from
- 5.5 stereotypes and limited career aspirations are challenged, for example through the use of positive actions activities, taster sessions, the use of appropriate role models and work placements
- 5.6 communications with young people are adapted to reflect the different needs of recipients (e.g. in relation to basic skills needs or disabilities)
- 5.7 active efforts are made to ensure that the information, advice and guidance workforce reflects the diversity of the wider community

Equality Duties and Equality Schemes

All public sector organisations are now legally obliged to positively promote equality rather than just taking steps to prevent discrimination. They have to increase equality for service users and staff, and monitor and review progress to ensure they are delivering results. These legal duties relate to race, gender and disability and organisations must put in place Equality Schemes which show how they will fulfill these duties under each area.

Many bodies now develop 'Single Equality Schemes' (SES), covering these three and the other three areas subject to equality legislation: age, religion and belief, and

sexual orientation. Many also extend in to wider areas impacting on equality such as class, domestic violence, community cohesion and human rights.

Obligations within each area focus on:

- promoting equality of opportunity
- promoting good relations
- promoting positive attitudes
- eliminating harassment
- eliminating unlawful discrimination

These obligations are set out in the Race Equality Duty (2001), the Disability Equality Duty (2005) and the Gender Equality Duty (2007).

To view the DCSF Single Equality Scheme go to: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/des/

The single Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) is the new all-embracing body for equality and human rights in the UK. It replaced the previously separate three commissions, CRE (Commission for Race Equality), DRC (Disability Rights Commission) and EOC (Equal Opportunities Commission) in October 2007. For further information on equalities legislation and policy visit the CEHR's web-site at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/

Community Cohesion

The Government's Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) was established in August 2006 to explore how local areas can make the most of the benefits delivered by increasing diversity - and also to consider how they can respond to the tensions this can cause. It was tasked with developing practical approaches to building communities' own capacity to prevent and manage tensions and developing local and practical solutions to building community cohesion at a local level.

It's report, *Our Shared Future* was published in June 2007, setting out practical proposals for building cohesion and integration at a local level. The report contained a number of specific recommendations and proposals for local cohesion work and provides practical approaches to building communities' own capacity to reduce tensions and create opportunities for more integrated and cohesive societies.

Report available at: www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/

The Government's response document to *Our Shared Future* was published in February 2008; laying out its response to the CIC's recommendations and detailing progress made across government since the Commission reported. Since that time, the Communities and Local Government Dept, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have been working to develop a Cohesion Delivery Framework to provide further advice for local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships in delivering cohesion. The following definition and vision has been agreed:

"Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another."

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

1. People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
2. People knowing their rights and responsibilities
3. People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

And three key ways of living together:

1. A shared future vision and sense of belonging
2. A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
3. Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

The clear links between and a shared understanding and approach to equalities and community cohesion are emphasised across the local strategic partnership (LSP), with responses based on local needs and circumstances (from: www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8799519)

Initiatives specifically affecting IYSS include:

Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities

Published by DCSF in July 2007, points to a clear need to dispel negative perceptions of young people by building better relations between the generations, as well as between different ethnic and faith groups. It believes these actions will foster better community cohesion, and generate a stronger sense of collective responsibility for children and young people. It believes that negative perceptions of young people today and levels of fear and mistrust undermine community cohesion, as well as adding to young people's own perceptions of not having a stake or place in society

Aiming High believes that work with young people is a critical starting point for tackling the tensions between different groups in the community and underlines the important role positive activities have in developing community cohesion; particularly in bridging the gaps between young people from different ethnic and faith groups as well as improving relationships across different generations. The Strategy therefore sets out its plans to transform opportunities for young people and strengthen the reform of youth support services to address these tensions with the following aims:

- to foster a more positive approach to young people across society and in particular within communities
- to increase their participation in high quality positive activities, which build resilience and social and emotional skills
- to empower young people to have greater influence over services for them, with parents and communities playing their part.

Available at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/tenyearyouthstrategy/.../cyp

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a new duty on governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion. In July 2007 the DCSF published guidance for schools on the **Duty to Promote Cohesion**. The guidance includes further development of 'school linking' recommendations, as well as practical advice for schools considering how best to meet the new duty, which came into effect from September 2007.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/communitycohesion/

Youth Support Workers should be aware of the legal and ethical duties on them and responsibilities they hold to actively promote equality and community cohesion including in work undertaken with young people in schools. They should help all young people to know and realise their potential, raising their aspirations and support them in their achievement. They should give all young people the support they need appropriate to their needs and help young people overcome any bias that they may encounter in fulfilling their aims. They should undertake an informed and professional approach to their work, in their conduct and in the language used. Resources and materials should actively promote diversity, equal opportunities and community cohesion.

Working in the Faith Sector

Youth Support Workers working in faith communities, schools or colleges or with young people from faith backgrounds must ensure that the services they provide remain impartial.

Across the different faith groups - and even within them - there will be a range of attitudes and responses to the issues young people face. It is important that Practitioners do not assume that they know what these attitudes are and they must take the time to find out - before and whilst providing services to the young person. In all cases, Practitioners should not make value or moral judgements about the beliefs of different faiths.

Youth Support Workers should seek to ensure that their services, support and advice to young people in a faith context includes the range of options that would be encouraged by the relevant faith community, school or college. They must help the young person to understand the possible implications of making certain choices within a faith context and make certain that appropriate support is available to assist the young person in any decisions they may choose to make.

Where possible, and subject to the confidentiality and information sharing guidance in Annex 2, Youth Support Workers should actively seek to involve parents/carers and, where relevant, the school/college in their work with young people.

Annex 4

Health and Safety and Professional Boundaries

IYSSs are required by law to have a written health and safety policy and to bring it to the attention of their employees. This policy must comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, 2003 and 2006².

The Health and Safety at Work Act 'requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees, so far as is reasonably practicable, and the health and safety of all other people affected by the employer's undertakings whether on or off premises.' This includes students and visitors as well as any other young people using the services.

The CIPD on-line fact-sheet 'Health and Safety at Work' introduces the law on health and safety at work and outlines employers' obligations. Available at: www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/health/general/healthsafetywork.htm

IYSSs and individual services and organisations should have in place or be covered by Health and Safety working practices and policies and Youth Support Workers should adhere to these policies. They should ensure that all potential risks and dangers are appropriately notified and must not take unnecessary risks, particularly when working alone.

Violence, threats and abuse directed at staff are unacceptable, but Youth Support Workers may have to confront such behaviours in the course of their work with young people. They need to be able to address these behaviours appropriately while ensuring the personal safety of themselves, young people and others as relevant. Managing violence, threats and abuse is the responsibility of both the employer and the employee and managers should ensure appropriate support and safety measures are in place.

Workers should follow the health and safety policy of their organisation and/or IYSS depending on local arrangements and any additional procedures applicable to the specific situations within which they are working. Further information on health and safety in schools and youth provision can be found in the following publications, which can be obtained from the DfEE (now DCSF) Publication Centre:

- *Guidance on First Aid for schools: A Good Practice Guide* (ref: PP3/34348/698/254)
- *Supporting Pupils With Medical Needs: A Good Practice Guide* (ref: PP3/700/53)
Help to draw up policies on managing medication in schools, and to put in place effective management systems to support individual pupils with medical needs. Also contains pro-forma, which can be used by schools.
- *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide* 1998 (ref: HSPV2)

A Three Part Supplement to Good Practice Guide (above), 2002:

² Statutory Instrument 1999/3242 and as amended by S.I. 2003/2457 and S.I. 2006 No. 438

- i. *Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits*: Sets out good practice for local education authorities in overseeing educational visits carried out by schools. Schools, IYSS and others will find the principles set out here useful too.
 - ii. *Standards for Adventure*: Aimed at the teacher or youth worker who leads young people on adventure activities
 - iii. *A Handbook for Group Leaders*: Aimed at anyone who leads groups of young people on any kind of educational visit. It sets out good practice in supervision, ongoing risk assessment and emergency procedures
- *School Security – Dealing with Troublemakers*: DfEE/Home Office, 1997) (ref: PP47D14/31050/1297/54)
 - *Screening and Searching of Pupils for Weapons: Guidance for School Staff*: DfES 2007 (Supplement to Dealing with Troublemakers, 1997)

All above publications available at:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/

Professional Boundaries

In all cases, Youth Support Workers should only practise within their levels of competence and within recognised professional boundaries. They should not seek to provide directly help and support that they are not trained to give. However, this does not mean that they should avoid exploring areas of need with young people that fall outside their area of competence. When Youth Support Workers do find such areas of concern, they should seek advice from line managers/supervisors and, more importantly, broker relationships with other specialist colleagues or agencies within the local or neighbouring IYSS and TYS that can provide the specialist support the young person needs.

Working this way in a multi-agency environment is a key element of the services IYSS and TYS need to provide to young people.

Local Policies and Procedures

All IYSS and TYS should have local policies and procedures in place to protect the worker and young people. These may include:

- Lone working
- Home visiting
- Carrying young people in personal vehicles
- Off-site and residential
- Dealing with challenging behaviour, conflict and restraint
- Weapons

Annex 5

IYSS Youth Support Worker Roles

a) The Role of the Connexions Personal Adviser (PA)

The statutory provisions set out in the DCSF Transition Guidance (2007) to local authorities encompass the scope of the service delivered by the Connexions PA role. It specifies:

i) Key Elements of the Role:

The PA's work with young people can be divided into three main areas:

- direct work with the young person and parents/carers, including planning and intervention
- brokerage, including relationships with employers, schools and colleges, planning and working with other agencies and informal and community networks
- review, including tracking young people's progress, monitoring, gathering and reviewing outcome information, and the capture and maintenance of management information.

ii) Qualifications, Training and Professional Development:

PAs should be recruited from a range of professional disciplines and should have:

- as a minimum attained or actively working toward an NVQ level 4 (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline, plus relevant appropriate assessment framework training
- a robust framework for evaluation of professional practice and ongoing professional supervision to inform reflective practice

A Connexions PA offers a confidential service to young people; works with them to identify and address their needs; ensures they are able and motivated to engage in education, training and employment; and enables young people to make a successful transition to adult life. One of the key functions of the role is to identify young people's barriers to learning and to provide or facilitate a service which addresses these needs in a coherent way.

Fully qualified PAs will also have completed the required range of local training – e.g. child protection, information sharing etc – and may, in addition, have their own areas of expertise. PAs who are not yet fully qualified will be **actively** working towards these standards and local Connexions Services must ensure that an appropriate level of supervision is in place (additional to normal line management and/or supervision arrangements) until the PA is fully qualified.

Whatever stage a PA has reached in their qualifications or training, they should undertake continuous professional development to continually update their knowledge and enable them to become an increasingly effective professional. This includes further formal training and qualifications.

Young people and their families expect PAs to have the necessary experience, training and qualifications to deliver the Connexions Service. PAs should be able to form effective supporting relationships with young people, encouraging and motivating them, helping them to overcome any barriers to learning, development and employment and enabling them to achieve their potential.

The role of the Personal Adviser

Regardless of any expertise they may have, all PAs are expected to deliver the core Connexions service as follows:

- make available information and initial advice services to all young people on the full range of issues that relate to their participation in learning and progress towards adult and working life. This element would include initial advice on career and learning options, and on opportunities for personal development and community involvement, but not in-depth career guidance
- provide more intensive forms of guidance and support to those young people who are assessed as needing it, and for whom the Connexions Service is agreed as being the most appropriate source of help. This would include in-depth career guidance and sustained support, advocacy and brokerage activities
- encourage, signpost and help all young people to access other activities and support as necessary, delivered by the partners and sectors represented in the local IYSS, e.g. general school and college provision, Youth Service, Targeted Youth Support Services such as Youth Offending Service, Princes Trust etc.

PAs must fulfil this function in line with the following six key roles of the PA:

- engage with young people to identify and address their needs, offering information, advice and guidance on learning and career options and personal development opportunities, with a view to raising the aspirations of each young person
- work with and support education and training institutions and employers in meeting the needs of young people
- work with a network of voluntary, statutory and community agencies, and commercial bodies to ensure a coherent approach to support for the young person
- work with parents, carers and families to support young people in accessing learning and other personal development opportunities
- manage information effectively to facilitate the process of meeting the needs of young people
- review and reflect upon their own professional practice to achieve continuous improvement