

# Mindsets and Mechanisms – making integration work in youth support services

## Research report

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## Acknowledgements

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**Liverpool, Medway, Merton, Newcastle, Staffordshire, Wakefield and Warwickshire.**

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## Executive summary

This report is based on research commissioned by CfBT Education Trust and conducted by the National Youth Agency in 2010–11. It was designed to establish how arrangements for creating Integrated Youth Support (IYS) services are working out and what effect they are having on outcomes for young people.

The findings come from two sources. Two online surveys of senior managers were carried out in 2010 and 2011 to gather quantitative data on structures and changes in service provision. The first survey achieved a high response rate, but the level of response to the second was much lower. These surveys were accompanied by case studies based on interviews and focus groups with managers, staff and elected members in seven local authorities, intended to gain an insight into their views and experiences of integration.

The report begins with an overview of the evolving policy context for the research and how local authorities and their partners have initially responded to policy imperatives. It then shows how they have conceptualised and implemented the proposed reforms; illustrates the kinds of partnership arrangements that are being developed; identifies and exemplifies the progress being made and the outcomes achieved; and indicates some of the challenges that lie ahead.

### Context

At the time of the research local services for young people were still primarily being driven by previous government policies, in particular *Every Child Matters*, *Youth Matters* and *Aiming high for young people*, through which children's trusts were required to ensure that integrated youth support services were established in their areas, and that young people were made an integrated youth offer. This offer typically has four elements: positive activities; opportunities to volunteer and be actively involved in communities; high quality information, advice and guidance; and targeted youth support (TYS).

Arrangements and structures for integrated services were not prescribed by government but were intended to respond to local needs and circumstances. The surveys reveal that in virtually all cases of integrated youth support the youth service and Connexions are included as principal partners, but thereafter there is a much greater variance in the services managed within integrated provision in different areas. This was borne out by the case studies, which identified a wide range of services within IYS, including youth justice, extended schools, drugs and alcohol advice and support, education welfare and behaviour support, and mental health. Local authorities and their partners have also adopted a variety of organisational approaches to integrating services, including alignment of different services at senior manager level with joint planning and reporting, area-based services which retain traditional management arrangements, and co-located multi-disciplinary teams managed across professional specialist areas.

### Vision

Local services by and large shared a common vision of integration. During discussions, the key elements were commonly expressed as:

- adopting a multi-agency approach
- providing a single point of access for young people – 'no wrong door'



- identifying gaps and avoiding duplication
- making more efficient use of resources and services
- developing a shared agenda based on the needs of young people rather than professional interests
- adopting a holistic approach to supporting young people.

There was general agreement that successful integration depends on securing understanding and commitment from all those involved, so that working together becomes seen as the default approach. The structures provide the leadership and framework for embedding this in working practices and performance management. It is also important to ensure that both structures and working practices recognise the value of the contribution made by different services, establishing clear roles and boundaries for each profession while seeking to create a shared culture. This is particularly important in negotiating inevitable tensions between services working within a framework of enforcement and those based on voluntary engagement.

### **Partnerships**

Successful partnerships pre-dated the establishment of integrated services in many case study areas, but there was a general belief that integration has increased and strengthened partnership working. At senior level, the surveys and case studies show that service managers are represented on a range of strategic boards and groupings. The setting up of IYS and TYS boards also provided opportunities to bring together partners, although in some cases overlap with other strategic bodies was reported. In some authorities the voluntary and community sector is seen as a key partner in providing services and the importance of establishing transparent relationships for commissioning provision was stressed.

At operational level, front-line staff and managers reported relationships with a varied range of partners. Youth workers said that other services were increasingly seeking to involve them to help them meet their own targets. In particular, work with schools and work with the police were cited as areas where traditional wariness has been replaced by positive relationships and joint activities. In several areas TYS arrangements are focused on schools, and involve an increasingly wide range of practitioners. More variable relationships were reported with services such as social care and health; although there were examples of effective and improving joint work, issues related to thresholds for intervention and workloads were frequently identified as barriers to partnership work.

Many of the case studies highlighted the somewhat ambivalent role of youth offending services (YOS), also known as youth offending teams. Although these are structurally located in IYS in most areas, they were sometimes seen to stand apart from other services, with their multi-disciplinary nature meaning that they may be perceived – and perceive themselves – as self-sufficient. Logistical difficulties were also identified when YOS activity is organised on an authority-wide basis while other work is area-based. Despite this, examples of positive initiatives were identified, and the experience of youth offending services in bringing together staff from different professional backgrounds was seen to provide a valuable model for integrating a wider range of services for young people.



## **Progress**

The online surveys found that the most common approach to integration was the creation of locality-based teams. The process of integrating staff was most commonly described as ‘presenting some challenges but manageable’, and the majority of staff were said to be positive about working within an IYS structure. The two surveys also indicated moves towards pooling both workforce and delivery budgets.

The case studies stressed the importance of joint training in helping develop a shared vision of the benefits of integration and its implementation. Front-line managers had found government-funded, externally-provided management development programmes valuable. Services have also organised training on specific aspects of IYS, such as TYS, the Common Assessment Framework, and recording evidence and impact. Services also reported progress in coordinating arrangements for vulnerable young people, developing protocols and shared understanding of needs related to data sharing and confidentiality, and recording evidence of impact and outcomes – although this remains a particular challenge for youth work.

## **Impact**

Survey respondents in both 2010 and 2011 believed that IYS has led to an improvement in both service delivery and outcomes for young people. Those responding to the earlier survey highlighted improvements relating to information, advice and guidance, and access to positive activities. The much smaller number responding to the 2011 survey believed that TYS has also improved.

In reporting on their performance, all of the case study authorities used the national indicators associated with PSA 14 (‘young people on the road to success’): increasing participation in positive activities; and reducing first-time entrants to the juvenile justice system, under-18 conceptions, substance misuse and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). They all reported success against some of these measures, which they – in part, at least – attributed directly to greater integration of services. Specific examples cited included partnership work to identify and make provision for NEET young people, the co-location of universal and specialist provision leading to increased uptake of substance misuse services, and a triage project with the police to divert young people from court.

More specific examples of improved outcomes include a holiday project for young people with high care needs jointly funded by the youth service and social care; the use of football in the community during the construction of a new housing development in order to counter vandalism and develop young people’s skills; and a partnership project which reduced the number of arson-related incidents by half.

## **Future challenges**

It is clear that integrating services is generally seen as a positive development by managers and staff alike. It brings with it challenges and tensions, but these are seen as well worth tackling to secure improved services and outcomes for young people.

When considering future challenges, managers and staff identified some specific areas, such as retaining relationships with schools, the move towards localism, and ensuring that staff have appropriate skills and training.



However, not surprisingly, the overwhelming concern was the massive cuts in funding facing services and their likely impact on front-line provision, in particular on universal, open-access provision for young people. The cuts are, in some authorities studied, already leading to reorganisation with consequent destabilisation of staff and potential loss of direction in developing integrated services.

But despite these very real concerns about cuts and changes to structures, staff and managers expressed their belief in that continuing to work in an integrated way is essential if services are to survive and develop in these difficult times. They also highlighted the importance of strong leadership in ensuring that services continue to work together to use reduced budgets creatively, rather than becoming defensive or competing with each other.

While we are still awaiting the coalition government's youth policy document, Minister Tim Loughton, speaking at the Positive for Youth summit in March 2011, described the government's youth policy as being based on four principles: young people playing an active role; community involvement; prioritising the most vulnerable young people; and increasing the range of providers. This vision chimes well with the benefits achieved by integrating youth support services. These include:

- a change in mindset through which working in partnership has become the default approach, and both services and young people are perceived as 'ours' rather than 'mine' or 'yours'
- more coordinated and effective support for vulnerable young people
- involvement of a much wider range of partners – both within and outside integrated youth support – to secure provision
- young people being involved in identifying needs, deciding on priorities and assessing the quality of services
- improved outcomes for young people as a direct result of integration.

There is a clear link between these achievements and public policy aspirations for young people. Local authorities and their partners will no doubt adopt different structures and delivery methods to meet the demands they face, but the good practice developed during the process of integration offers a valuable basis for further development and improvement of services for young people.



*The evidence is essentially the testimony of managers, staff and elected members who were interviewed as part of focus groups in seven local authority areas.*

## Introduction

This report is derived from research conducted by the National Youth Agency in 2010–11 and commissioned by CfBT Education Trust. It was designed to establish how arrangements for creating Integrated Youth Support (IYS) services for young people are working out and what impact these are having on outcomes for young people.

The findings come from two sources of evidence. The first is an online survey conducted in two stages (spring 2010 and 2011) that was aimed at senior service managers and designed to collect quantitative data on structures and processes for partnership working and the changes these were bringing to service provision. The second is a series of seven case studies intended to capture more qualitative evidence of how services are being configured and what differences these are making to providers and users, principally young people themselves.

The evidence is essentially the testimony of managers, staff and elected members who were interviewed as part of focus groups in seven local authority areas: two county councils, two unitary authorities, two metropolitan councils and one London borough. They are not meant to be a representative sample of the spread and number of local authorities in England but they were selected because they agreed to participate. We wish to record here our gratitude to them for doing so, especially given the particularly challenging times they are facing. The names of these areas are listed in the Appendix.

The report begins with an overview of the evolving policy context for the research and how local authorities and their partners have initially responded to policy imperatives. It then shows how they have conceptualised, interpreted and implemented the proposed reforms; illustrates the kinds of partnership arrangements that are being established and developed as the platforms for integration; identifies and exemplifies the progress being made and the outcomes achieved; and indicates some of the challenges that lie ahead.

The testimony provided has not been validated or moderated by observation and appraisal. We have simply attempted to collate and synthesise what has been told to us so as to try and establish any trends or patterns. It does not claim to give a national overview but does hopefully give an intelligible account of how the land lay in a small number of areas at the time of the research.



*Young people, in particular those who come from troubled families and damaged communities, encounter many challenges in their transition to adulthood.*

## 1. Context

### 1.1 Policy

At the time of this research, local policies towards services for young people were still being driven principally by national priorities established under successive New Labour governments. These were derived from *Every Child Matters*<sup>1</sup> and its successor policy for young people, *Youth Matters*<sup>2</sup> and were directed towards achieving the key outcomes relating to young people's safeguarding, health, educational achievement, economic well-being and making a positive contribution to the wider community. Children's trusts (the local authorities and their partners, including schools, the health service, police and voluntary and community organisations) had also been required by legislation and guidance following the joint strategy<sup>3</sup> of HM Treasury and the former Department for Children, Schools and Families to ensure that in each area integrated youth support (IYS) services were established and that young people were made an integrated youth offer. Arrangements and structures for integrated services were not prescribed by government but were intended to respond to local needs and circumstances.

The rationale for integration has been set out in many policy debates and is now well known. Young people, in particular those who come from troubled families and damaged communities, encounter many challenges in their transition to adulthood. Many of the problems they experience are multiply-derived and inter-connected and therefore it makes sense to tackle them in as joined-up a fashion as possible. This requires agencies who work with young people to communicate effectively with each other, share information, intelligence and resources, and align themselves more closely through partnerships and collaborative working. Young people themselves should be involved in shaping the services and opportunities provided, in particular by contributing their ideas on the youth offer. Their voice and influence, as well as their contribution to community life, are meant to be salient features of this policy.

In each of the services that provided case studies as part of this research, the influence of these policies was evident. They all interpreted the offer they should make in much the same way:

- more opportunities for young people to take part in **positive activities** in the evening, at weekends and during school holiday periods
- support for young people to **volunteer and become actively involved** in their communities
- high quality **information, advice and guidance** so young people can make informed choices
- multi-agency **targeted support** for each young person who has serious problems or is at risk.

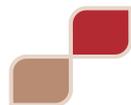
### 1.2 Initial responses

Between the end of March and early May 2010, CfBT and the NYA conducted an online survey into the organisation and impact of integrated youth support services, targeted at all first-tier local authorities in England. It received 105 replies, a response rate of just over two-thirds. There was a good spread of replies from all types of local authority; two-fifths were from unitary authorities, and one-fifth from counties, metropolitan boroughs and London boroughs respectively. There was also

<sup>1</sup> *Every Child Matters: presented to Parliament by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury at the Command of Her Majesty.* The Stationery Office, September 2003.

<sup>2</sup> *Youth Matters: presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills by Command of Her Majesty.* The Stationery Office, July 2005.

<sup>3</sup> *Aiming high for young people: ten year strategy for positive activities.* HM Treasury and Department for Children, Schools and Families, July 2007. *Youth Matters* and *Aiming high* have been archived; they have been made available for reference but should not be considered to reflect current policy or guidance (Department for Education website – [www.education.gov.uk/publications](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications)).



*... some case study authorities stressed that a move towards integrating services had been evolving over a number of years, in order to respond more effectively to local needs.*

a good geographical spread with 20 responses coming from London and between eight and 15 from each of the remaining eight government regions.

The survey was repeated in spring 2011. The response rate was significantly lower; only 26 local authorities (17%) replied, itself a likely indicator of the state of turmoil and churn within the sector. Almost half of these were unitary authorities. Given this very low response rate, the findings from this second survey must be treated with caution.

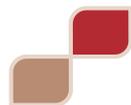
The 2010 survey responses showed that the majority of services have their main focus on the teenage years, with three-quarters stating that their service covered either young people aged 11 to 19 (42%) or 13 to 19 (33%). A minority of authorities (14) included children in their target group, spanning the ages of 0 to 19 or 8 to 19. Several stated that their service goes up to age 25 for those with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The 2011 survey responses indicated no change to this pattern.

The 2010 survey revealed that virtually all integrated services include the youth service (95%) and the vast majority also include Connexions (83%). After these two services there is a noticeable drop-off to the next most common services managed within IYS: teenage pregnancy (54%) and youth offending teams/services (50%). This suggests a great deal of variance in the type of services managed within IYS in different areas. This is further borne out by around a fifth of respondents naming other services not within the original list which are also managed with IYS – for example Play Development, Family Intervention Team, Extended Services and Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP). The 2011 survey revealed again that the youth service and Connexions service were those most commonly managed within the core IYS service, with services to counter teenage pregnancy and substance misuse also in the core of more than half. It also showed that in every service but one the targeted youth support (TYS) service sits firmly within the structure and in two-thirds of these is designed to support young people at Tier 2 – i.e. young people with additional support needs.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the national policy drivers, some case study authorities stressed that a move towards integrating services had been evolving over a number of years, in order to respond more effectively to local needs. Other considerations, such as economies of scale, have also driven services to integrate. In one of the authorities it was decided early on in the planning of IYS to adapt government policy to suit its particular circumstances and priorities. It has therefore aimed services not only at the primary age range of young people aged 13 to 19, but also at those as young as eight (and extending upwards to those aged 20 to 25) in need of specialist as well as open-access interventions, opportunities and support. This approach stemmed in part from the belief that early intervention was necessary, *'otherwise we would be playing catch-up and providing an ambulance service'*. Here, the integrated youth offer was expressed in terms of *'access to somewhere to go, something to do and someone to listen'* which became the strap-line of the integrated youth offer in many services.

Another authority launched its youth offer in 2010 for implementation in 2011. Its key elements include development of the range of positive activities across the city; appropriate information on and improved access to these activities; pooled budgets, wherever possible, for commissioning this work; and common branding of activities across the children's trust. The offer was developed following consultation with young people who will also be involved in evaluating services.

<sup>4</sup> Tier 2 needs are those where there are indications that without the provision of services, needs may escalate or circumstances deteriorate to the detriment of the young people or families concerned. Services provided within Tier 2 tend to be designed so as to be activated as early as possible, sometimes even where need is predicted rather than presenting. Within Tier 2, participation is most likely to be on a voluntary basis where parents and young people, alongside supportive professionals, have identified a need and are willing and able to access appropriate services.



*The children's trust's strategy sets out how the local youth service and Connexions will be a 'virtual service' with alignment around leadership and management and key processes...*

Children's trusts recognised that close alignment of services would be a pre-condition for this kind of offer to be made. In some areas, such alignment was already well under way during recent years, in particular between local authority youth services and Connexions, the former providing informal social education in young people's leisure time and contributing towards intensive support targeted at those most in need; and the latter providing information, advice and guidance on education, careers and other matters relating to young people's personal and social development.

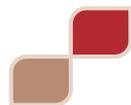
In one of the cities, integration has been based on the closer working of the youth service and Connexions with other services being incrementally drawn in. The children's trust's strategy sets out how the local youth service and Connexions will be a 'virtual service' with alignment around leadership and management and key processes, including jointly developing an annual plan.

Other case study authorities have brought additional service areas into integrated services, such as youth offending services/teams (YOS), extended schools, drugs and alcohol services, aspects of children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), education welfare and behaviour services, and alternative education. They have adopted a variety of structural approaches to developing integrated services, including alignment of different services at senior manager level with joint planning and reporting; area-based services which retain traditional management arrangements; and co-located multi-disciplinary teams managed across professional specialist areas.

In one authority the IYS manager reports to one of three assistant directors in the Children, Schools and Families department, but many of his functions are managed by the other two assistant directors. In another, management and strategic functions have been separated at senior level, with the creation of a lead specialist practitioner for youth (one of five specialist practitioners), who is responsible for developing integrated approaches to strategy, policy, planning and delivery for IYS (as well as for some services not structurally located in IYS) but does not manage services. Services are delivered through three area teams (as well as some cross-borough services such as the youth offending team), which include staff from youth work, parenting and family support, Connexions, educational psychology and attendance services. The model is at a very early stage, and managers and staff at all levels expressed concerns about lines of accountability and how the relationships between staff, their line managers and the lead specialists will work in practice.

Another authority has adopted a 'youth hub' model, with each of three areas hosting a hub which forms the base for multi-disciplinary staff teams, together with satellite, detached and outreach provision. Each hub is open 12 hours a day for six days a week. This model aims to provide a single point of access to a range of activities and services, facilitating young people's transition between universal and specialist provision. The area teams include staff with varied professional backgrounds, including youth work, Connexions, the police, sports development, substance misuse and counselling.

Many children's trusts have developed structures to devolve arrangements for multi-agency work to neighbourhoods and involve local community groups and organisations in the process. Both strategically at elected member and senior officer level, and operationally, steps have been taken to join up the planning and provision of services so that they reflect the needs and best interests of young people rather than the requirements of the provider organisations. In one of the case study areas the leadership for creating the IYS service was taken by those working in the local authority's youth and community service at county, district and local levels. This entailed the creation of five area teams and 19 locality forums working to common objectives at different levels. Parallel to



*Significantly in the vast majority of locality forums, the principal priority is provision of and participation in positive activities.*

the creation of these bodies for professional staff was the creation of representative structures for young people where they could express their voice and use their influence to shape services locally to be responsive to their needs. Significantly in the vast majority of locality forums, the principal priority is provision of and participation in positive activities.

In another authority the national policy drivers mentioned earlier have shaped the focus of the local response. More locally, findings from serious case reviews had highlighted the lack of joined-up work between services and agencies. From April 2010 the local authority has formally established an integrated youth support service and referral processes have become easier with young people no longer seen to 'belong' to a single service. Staff reported that they do not now have to rely solely on personal networks for the closer alignment of services to take place.



## 2. Vision

*There was general agreement that successful integration of services depends on securing understanding and commitment from all those involved, so that working together becomes seen as the default approach.*

Local services by and large shared a common vision of integration albeit with subtle differences in the terms used to capture it; and in the emphases given to particular aspects. For example, equality of access was a particular focus in one of the metropolitan boroughs. Many identified the ‘no wrong door’ approach as being critical after years in which it had been common for young people and their families to feel as though they were being passed from pillar to post in search of the best opportunities for support and development. And as it has become increasingly clear that many of the challenges facing troubled and troublesome young people are inter-connected, so it has become equally apparent that no single professional agency working in isolation can successfully meet all the needs of a young person and their family. As one person commented, ‘we need to think of services as ours, not mine or yours.’

Therefore it was common to find statements of a vision for integrated youth support services expressed in the following terms:

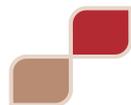
- adopting a multi-agency approach
- providing a single point of access for young people
- identifying gaps and avoiding duplication
- making more efficient use of resources and services
- developing a shared agenda based on the needs of young people rather than professional interests
- adopting a holistic approach to supporting young people.

For many heads of service it became a matter of formalising existing processes and arrangements; this did not always entail re-structuring because some senior managers saw it as an unnecessary distraction from service delivery.

There was general agreement that successful integration of services depends on securing understanding and commitment from all those involved, so that working together becomes seen as the default approach. The structures provide the leadership and framework for embedding this in working practices and performance management.

An important principle in the vision for integration articulated by one head of service, and echoed by others, is the need to recognise the value of the contribution made by each professional worker and agency, in order to ensure that staff from different services do not feel that their professional position is being compromised or their specific skills lost or under-used. The importance of retaining distinctive approaches and working methods, which are sometimes determined by legislative requirements, was stressed.

Staff and managers across the authorities were by and large positive about the experience of working with colleagues from different professional disciplines, and believed that integration has increased understanding of what different services can offer. But this understanding has had to be actively worked for. There are tensions between work located in a framework of non-negotiable engagement and enforcement, such as youth offending services and education welfare, and services based on voluntary engagement, such as youth work. Managers and staff highlighted the importance of establishing clear roles and boundaries for different professionals, being willing to have difficult conversations in a professional manner, and ensuring that appropriate management



*There needs to be active encouragement to explore different working cultures and seek to develop a common one based on putting young people's interests at the centre.*

and support mechanisms are in place. While co-locating staff was seen as helpful in increasing understanding about different roles and approaches, this in itself is not enough. There needs to be active encouragement to explore different working cultures and seek to develop a common one based on putting young people's interests at the centre. Managers in one authority highlighted the importance of developing *'a shared narrative about what we are trying to do'*.

In one service the vision of the new service leader was clear and echoed that of the children's trust, that *'every child and young person, including those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, has the greatest opportunity to be the best they can be'*. This vision was to be realised by creating a Division for Young People within the Directorate of Children, Young People and Families to bring services together to work with each other, with schools and colleges, and with other services outside the local authority but within the public and voluntary and community sectors.

In another authority, front-line managers see integration as meaning the removal of any silo mentality and not being precious about their work; and taking joint responsibility and sharing accountability for the Public Service Agreement 14 ('every young person on the road to success') indicators established by the Labour government that form the focus of attention for the aims and plans of the contributing services and the criteria by which they judge their results. Organisations now respond more quickly and have access to more resources, no longer chasing separate funding pots. There is a stable team and relationships are well established between youth and community, the local leisure trust, Connexions, police, fire and rescue, schools, and PAYP (a voluntary organisation working with at-risk children aged eight to 13). Everyone has a mandate to say 'yes' to working together.

In this locality-based service the key difference brought about by integrating youth support services is that there is now a named and known person in each locality for coordinating activities and interventions and there is a central focal point for youth issues. Reportedly, there is now leadership where once there was ownership, with each agency having its own particular boxes to tick, and everybody now has an interest in other people's work. The youth offer has provided a focus and a rallying point for collaboration.

In other authorities, integrating services has been a matter of formalising existing processes and arrangements. One authority described its approach as enabling integrated working to take place and building on existing partnerships rather than creating new structures. Its service manager sees integration as increasing connectivity among all services working with adolescents, including those, such as housing providers, who would not see themselves part of IYS. Comments from managers and staff in this authority included *'it's about a way of working rather than a configuration of services'* and *'it's a journey, the further you go the further you see there is to go'*. This authority decided that bringing services together in locality-based or multi-disciplinary teams was not appropriate for a variety of reasons, including the small size of the authority, difficulties in integrating locality-based and centrally delivered services, and the need to base services around secondary schools. This was endorsed by managers and staff alike.

Managers felt that this more fluid approach to integrated working means that they are required to work together more strategically to meet the needs of young people. Managers and staff attributed the success of the authority's approach to integration to strong leadership with good understanding of each service area, and to high levels of trust and goodwill. Services have been mapped against a model of young people's needs to identify the level at which they work, which has increased understanding of different roles within services and between different agencies. Partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors were said to be relying on each other to help them meet their targets in a much more transparent way, and to have greater trust that different services would offer young people good quality support.



## 3. Partnerships

*Not all the case study authorities have set up discrete IYS boards, but where these exist they bring together a wide range of partners.*

### 3.1 Structures and processes

It has become clear from these case studies that integration is a vision that depends for its realisation on the establishment of strong partnerships between services, agencies and individuals at strategic and operational levels. Partnerships take many forms and are created for different purposes. Some may be short in duration and others longer term. The underlying principle is that service providers can do more together than they can on their own and no single service has a monopoly in meeting young people's needs and aspirations. The resultant benefits are intended to be twofold: added value of the services to the tax-payers and better range and quality of services to the users.

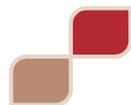
Successful partnership work pre-dated the establishment of integrated services in many authorities, but there was a general belief that integration had increased and strengthened partnership working. While discussions highlighted the continued importance of personalities and individual relationship in developing effective partnership work, structures and strategies were seen to be important in giving staff from different agencies a mandate to talk together and in formalising expectations of integrated working within performance management arrangements.

Service managers reported representation on a wide range of strategic boards and groupings. In one authority, for instance, the manager of services for young people is a member of various strategic groups, including the 14–19 partnership, community safety, safeguarding boards, schools forum and the CAMHS partnership, and reports to the children's trust. Other service managers reported representation on boards relating to teenage pregnancy, youth offending, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and corporate parenting.

The online surveys also asked about representation on strategic boards. In 2010 it was quite common (71%) for the head of an IYS to sit on the 14–19 partnership board (or equivalent body). Just under half (49%) sat on the local community safety partnership but only 41 per cent sat on the local children's trust. This pattern was broadly repeated in 2011, although involvement in the local strategic partnership appears to have become more common.

Not all the case study authorities have set up discrete IYS boards, but where these exist they bring together a wide range of partners. In one authority, for instance, a board has been set up as one of six children's trust sub-groups. It meets every two months and brings together a range of agencies including health, teenage pregnancy, Connexions, housing, social care and voluntary agencies. It is seen as useful in providing channels for communication and a focus for reporting to the children's trust, but there is some confusion about where responsibilities are located for some areas of work, such as teenage pregnancy or NEET young people, since there are separate boards focusing on reducing teenage pregnancy and 14–19 provision. Other local authorities also reported some potential areas of overlap or duplication between IYS and other boards.

Bodies offering strategic leadership for TYS also brought together a range of agencies. In one of the cities, for instance, a strategy group brings together a range of partners including the YOS, the council's anti-social behaviour managers, sports, safer schools partnership, the police, fire and rescue service, social care, teenage pregnancy and the voluntary and community sector (VCS).



*Some case study authorities reported strong partnerships with the voluntary and community sector.*

In one local authority, staff and managers from various services including VCS organisations, the children's disability service, the volunteer centre and housing reported improved communication and increased engagement and, through being invited to meetings where they were not previously represented, finding opportunities for developing new partnerships. Front-line staff and managers generally agreed that the move towards integration has encouraged a more coordinated and purposeful approach to joint work, and more effective use of networks to open up opportunities to young people. For the volunteer centre, involvement in the IYS board and the relationship with the voluntary sector liaison officer has led to joint work across various council areas, including education, personalised budgets and libraries, as well as within IYS. Work is now advanced on a volunteering policy, which will embed volunteering across the local authority. The process of developing this has allowed the youth and volunteering sectors to share expertise and develop a common language and understanding.

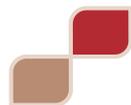
### **3.2 The voluntary and community sector**

Some case study authorities reported strong partnerships with the voluntary and community sector. In one city there has always been a strong partnership between the local authority and voluntary organisations in providing services for young people reflected in the notion of 'two sectors – one service', whereby local provision is made by whichever partner is best placed to do so.

In another authority, the voluntary youth sector currently employs more staff than the local authority youth service; in these circumstances integrated working becomes even more important since the local authority needs to work with the VCS to coordinate provision, in its role as commissioner and facilitator rather than directly delivering services. The model adopted by this authority in splitting managerial and strategic responsibilities is intended to encourage a more equal relationship with the VCS, by conferring legitimacy on the lead specialists as working on behalf of the children's trust, rather than as the local authority running services. However, some VCS representatives expressed the view that the model is now too complex to be workable, and that it is increasingly difficult for the voluntary sector to know how to get involved and who they should talk to.

Similarly, partnership arrangements were well established in another authority, with a youth partnership group bringing together voluntary and statutory providers of universal youth work and grant-funded specialist projects. The IYS funds a post in the local voluntary services council to support this partnership and develop the capacity of funded organisations. Following a needs analysis undertaken by this group in 2008, which included consultation with young people and borough and ward profiling, new commissioning arrangements were introduced, offering three-year, one-year and holiday project funding. A new manager post was created with responsibility for commissioning. This clear commissioner-provider split has created a more transparent relationship with the VCS and a message that the local authority is not seen as the preferred provider. Budgets from different services, including Connexions, the youth service, youth justice and Children's Fund were pooled to provide a single budget for commissioning positive activities and early intervention and prevention work, although different services have retained their cost centres for accounting purposes. A young commissioners' panel comprising young people from IYS-funded organisations has now been set up to involve young people – including vulnerable young people – in decisions about funding. However, this service reported difficulties in engaging with non-commissioned youth organisations, such as the Scout Association, Girl Guiding and uniformed groups.

Managers and staff in one authority that has introduced area-based youth services, which had previously been managed by function, believed that this has led to improved relationships with local agencies including the VCS and faith groups. In one locality, a partnership group had been



*... schools have been able to support pupils in a more informal 'youth work way', and have appreciated what youth workers can do to help young people.*

set up in April 2010, involving the youth service, Connexions, VCS organisations and the police. This meets quarterly, providing a focus for developing joint work, avoiding duplication, sharing good practice and supporting each other.

### 3.3 Schools

Mutual suspicion between teachers and youth workers has commonly been a feature of services for young people but there have been some conspicuous reversals of this pattern. For example, services for young people have increasingly become well represented on local 'teams around the school' as schools have been encouraged to look outside to find more effective approaches to providing support and development for pupils at risk of exclusion. In one area the main benefits of integration were linked to the team around the school structure, since schools have been able to support pupils in a more informal 'youth work way', and have appreciated what youth workers can do to help young people. The team around the school initiative was described as helping to raise the profile of youth work interventions, although there are always risks associated with youth workers being perceived by young people as compromised by a close involvement with teachers. In another authority, local schools were making facilities and staff available for joint holiday projects.

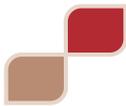
One authority started to move services towards a multi-disciplinary model in 2007, but encountered barriers to implementation that included a failure to build on existing successful working arrangements with schools. A new structure was therefore adopted two years later that ensured managers of locality-based teams had a clear strategic role with delivery based around school cluster areas.

In another authority the hub areas were set up to mirror the authority's learning communities. Managers reported positive relationships with schools, while TYS staff have developed joint work with school specialist staff such as educational psychologists. Safer Schools partnerships bring together the police, IYS, schools, health and other agencies to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in and around schools, create a safe school environment, improve behaviour and ensure that young people remain in education. Safer Schools partnership officers have been appointed to two community colleges and the pupil referral unit, and each of the seven neighbourhood policing teams includes a youth and schools officer. The partnership has developed a Year 7 education programme with good take-up by schools, and has also developed a Year 10 programme focusing on three core themes of anti-social behaviour, community cohesion and substance misuse.

At strategic level, one authority created a behaviour and attendance partnership board in 2008 to coordinate, commission and monitor services to implement the city's behaviour and attendance strategy. Meeting monthly during term time, its membership includes the IYS director, the five specialist lead practitioners, an integrated services manager, a YOS senior manager, the local YMCA chief executive, the targeted mental health in schools programme coordinator, a senior social care practitioner, and headteachers and deputy heads from city primary, secondary and special schools and the pupil referral unit.

### 3.4 Social care

Services reported variable relationships with children's social care, which in most cases is located outside IYS. The issues most commonly identified related to thresholds for intervention and social workers' caseloads. In one authority front-line managers and workers reported improved relationships. One staff member described taking the initiative in contacting a young person's social worker (with their permission) and then working together to provide complementary support



*Some services also reported an increased focus on family support to ensure that work has a long-term impact...*

and targets. Some social workers were also said to be more willing to share information and involve youth work staff in meetings. However, in another authority, front-line staff and managers expressed frustration that young people who they had identified within supervision as being at risk were still slipping through the net due to different interpretations of the thresholds for intervention and support. Following the most recent YOS inspection, significant work had been taken at a strategic and management level to address these issues.

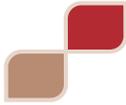
Some services also reported an increased focus on family support to ensure that work has a long-term impact and helps families provide a stable environment for troubled or troublesome young people. In one authority the IYS supports two programmes offering support for families with complex needs. It had also recently re-commissioned its substance misuse service to include support for parents and carers to help young people remain in their homes. Another authority has identified the need to join up the work of TYS and area social care and family support teams to create better referral routes in and out of services.

### **3.5 Youth justice**

While youth offending services are structurally located within IYS in most of the case study authorities, there appear to be mixed perceptions of their level of involvement. Youth offending services were sometimes seen to stand apart from other services, with the multi-agency nature of teams meaning that they may be perceived – and perceive themselves – as self-sufficient, a ‘multi-agency silo’. Front-line managers and staff in one authority also reported concerns that the youth offending agenda tended to come to the fore because of the statutory responsibilities attached to youth offending services. There are also some logistical difficulties, since YOS work tends to be delivered on an authority-wide basis, even where other work is area-based. Managers in one authority believed that the YOS was working much more closely with other services, having emerged from what was described as ‘its own YOT world’. However, front-line staff and managers said that they had only limited contact with the YOS staff apart from its prevention work. They also suggested that YOS staff may not see themselves as part of IYS. Youth workers reported that young people in contact with the YOS attended their projects, but it was rare for youth work staff to be included in developing individual plans.

Despite these difficulties, examples of positive work involving YOS were offered. In one area, the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme is working with the YOS on a redevelopment programme for young people leaving a secure training centre, as a direct result of managers being brought together across services. In others, youth workers have agreed to support young people referred through youth rehabilitation or other orders, providing they give informed consent and are involved in determining programmes and interventions. Operation Stay Safe, which aims to ensure that young people found out on the streets during late evenings are kept safe, has also provided an opportunity to develop partnerships between the YOS, the police, social care and other agencies.

Youth offending services were also seen to provide a valuable model for integrated working, having themselves successfully brought together staff from different professional backgrounds when they were established. One manager described the YOS in their authority as *‘having been through the turmoil of integrating people who would not traditionally talk to each other, let alone share an office’*. It had brought together staff from seven professions, and managers and staff acknowledged that considerable effort had been needed to overcome suspicion and to create a shared culture. Its experience has shown the importance of retaining professional disciplines within



*Attitudes changed once the local youth service had ‘put our heads above the parapet’ to argue that the initiative also needed to be about respect for young people.*

an integrated service, rather than creating homogenous workers. Managers also felt that it was their role to ensure that staff retain their focus, rather than being distracted or feeling pressurised to take on work outside their remit. YOS integration has also revealed the importance of adopting an open and structured process for identifying tensions between different services and individual approaches, acting within a clear policy framework. Where staff from specific services are based outside their own service, it was also seen to be important to be clear about lines of accountability and to provide mechanisms – such as structured ‘together time’ each week – to ensure that they remain linked to their home agency and their colleagues.

### **3.6 Police**

Another long-established example of inter-agency wariness has been in relationships between youth services and the police. This has been turned around in some areas. In one city, youth workers involved in an inter-agency initiative that initially focused on ‘crime and grime’ had, over time, promoted the benefits of youth work and, at a recent summit meeting concerning cuts, the police had been the most powerful advocates for youth work.

In the same authority, this more open attitude is well illustrated by the Respect initiative that had initially focused on respect for adults by adopting enforcement measures to counter anti-social behaviour. Attitudes changed once the local youth service had ‘put our heads above the parapet’ to argue that the initiative also needed to be about respect for young people. The Respect weeks now feature a whole range of activities for young people, and include a special awards and celebration event to acknowledge the contribution of children and young people. Front-line managers reported how their influence has even changed the language used in meetings – for examples, from diversionary activities to positive activities.

Positive examples of joint work with the police were also identified in other authorities. One authority has developed a model of neighbourhood action groups, which bring together representatives from the police, a housing provider, neighbourhood wardens, local councillors, and youth and community groups to tackle anti-social behaviour, and involvement in these has helped IYS staff develop strong relationships with the police. The police have also provided funding for young people using mobile provision to develop activities and projects.

### **3.7 Health**

Mixed experiences of work with health services, including CAMHS, were reported. Front-line staff in one authority reported that health services had trained youth work staff in areas such as smoking cessation, Chlamydia testing and C-Card (condom distribution) in order to help them meet their own targets. This was said to be the result of their recognition that youth workers’ non-formal education approach can engage young people more effectively, but also due to their lack of capacity to undertake this work themselves. The youth workers welcomed the increased recognition of their skills, but expressed some concerns about the effect on their workloads and potential loss of focus on traditional youth work approaches. Staff at the same authority also highlighted the recent inclusion of a substance misuse specialist on the TYS panel, which has led to increased attention being paid to substance misuse as a factor in young people’s behaviour.

Some authorities reported difficulties in accessing current information on teenage pregnancy; one authority has based a Connexions personal adviser at a local hospital to provide up-to-date information on pregnant young women and young mothers to help them put appropriate services



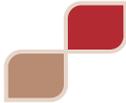
*One authority had found partnership working with Jobcentre Plus challenging...*

in place. One service involves a range of agencies to reduce teenage conceptions, focusing on work with the Year 9 age range (13- to 14-year-olds), including sex and relationship education delivered by youth workers, school nurses and health visitors. This authority has commissioned, jointly with the PCT, a 'risk and resilience' curriculum framework for use in schools, further education and IYS.

In one authority, there were plans for a forensic CAMHS to be based at the YOS; while some practicalities are yet to be resolved, the YOS substance misuse and dual diagnosis staff have been meeting on a fortnightly basis since October 2010. However, another service reported difficulties in accessing CAMHS because of definitions of thresholds and long waiting lists.

### **3.8 Other services**

Some authorities reported difficult relationships with specific services. One authority had found partnership working with Jobcentre Plus challenging, since staff at the local office appeared to use a high degree of discretion when making decisions, leading to some inconsistent treatment of young people. Another authority has found it difficult to establish partnerships with the council's contracted-out leisure services. The service manager in this authority commented that more guidance from the previous government on creating integrated services might have helped them make the case for including non-specialist services such as leisure in IYS.



*The idea was to start with practice and the different situations faced by practitioners, and lead staff to a better understanding of how to work together in an integrated way.*

## 4. Progress

The online surveys asked local authorities to indicate the extent to which participating services were integrated and how far they had progressed in pooling budgets. In 2010 only eight per cent of local authorities described their IYS as 'integrated throughout' and around a third (32%) were 'still largely operating within service boundaries but with overarching plans and strategies'. Around half (52%) of respondents said that their IYS was best described as 'integrated services operating at a local/locality level within integrated teams'. In 2011 the pattern remained largely the same with the figures reported as 15, 23 and 38 per cent respectively (with a range of other responses also provided).

In 2010 just over a third of IYS services (36%) had pooled delivery budgets. Two-fifths had pooled some (44%) or all (13%) workforce budgets. In 2011 workforce budgets have been pooled in two out of three services and delivery budgets in three out of five.

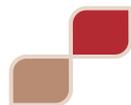
In 2010 just over half of the local authorities (55%) had integrated workers from different services into a new team as part of the development of IYS, and just under two-thirds (63%) of IYS staff were part of wider locality-based teams. For those areas which had integrated staff, the large majority (89%) found that the process presented 'some challenges but was manageable'. A small minority (six respondents) found the process 'very difficult' and conversely only three areas reported arrangements as being 'smooth – no problems'. In 2011 two-thirds of services that responded had integrated workers from different services into a new team as part of the IYS development, and over half of staff were part of locality-based structures or teams. For the majority this process of integration had presented challenges but was manageable. Nearly all reported staff as being fairly or very positive about working within an IYS structure.

An important starting-point on the road to integration, once a common vision had been signed up to by the participating services and organisations, was joint training for staff. This was deemed to be crucial to establish a commonly shared view about the benefits of integration and how it might be implemented, particularly where integration would be based on virtual teams rather than structural reorganisation. Joint training between service providers was regarded as critical in helping staff to recognise different cultures (*'the way we do things round here'*) and the need at times to suspend these in pursuit of shared objectives.

In one of the areas, training was based around case mapping with colleagues from different services. The idea was to start with practice and the different situations faced by practitioners, and lead staff to a better understanding of how to work together in an integrated way.

An example cited was training different professionals in the thresholds for intervention in the context of adopting a Think Family approach. Those from a youth work background struggled with the perspective adopted by the local youth offending service that a young person 'wasn't bad enough' to be engaged with and there was significant discussion and debate to make sure that staff understood which thresholds were appropriate for which service. The aim of this was to understand the complementary nature of relationships at the heart of integrated working in the city.

Coming to agreement about which thresholds might trigger which kinds of intervention has proved to be a challenge in a number of the case study areas. One authority has undertaken a review of all threshold documents to ensure that there is clarity about which services should intervene and



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at what level, to avoid the situation where an individual young person does not meet the criteria for one service but their needs are seen as too complex for others.

Preparation for integration has been helped enormously by local training programmes, in particular the government-funded Management Development Programme provided externally by FPM in which front-line managers from different services in a local authority area were brought together to explore, discuss and act on issues related to integration. This deepened people's understanding of the remits, roles and responsibilities of all services concerned with the support and development of young people, disabused people of erroneous notions and began to put in place the building blocks of trust and collaboration.

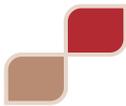
Other forms of training and support have focused on specific aspects of integrated services, for instance targeted youth support, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and recording evidence and impact. In one authority a locality team focused on the school handbook which was launched in 2009 to provide partners with practical guidance on integrated working. Another has developed an induction pack intended to give all staff a basic understanding of the aims and structure of IYS and the different services involved, which includes a set of 15 minimum standards for IYS. In another, IYS has paid for staff in other organisations to gain NVQ level 4 qualifications in information, advice and guidance, has opened up its training to staff from a range of disciplines and has developed a system of joint induction across IYS including VCS partners.

Some authorities have also developed regular meetings to bring together staff across services. One authority holds full service development meetings four times a year, which are designed to feature a mix of information relevant to the whole service, and to provide opportunities for different teams to lead workshops on specific issues and share best practice. Individual teams also have two team development days a year, focusing on multi-disciplinary work and improving services. Some staff in other authorities suggested that they would welcome more opportunities for meeting colleagues from other areas or services.

However, inevitably there are tensions associated with integration as services come to recognise and work with different ways of seeing young people and the challenges they face as they grow. Despite these, accommodations have been made and it is common, for example, for a personal adviser employed by Connexions to be located in a youth club or centre provided by a local authority or voluntary organisation; and, vice-versa, for a youth worker to accompany a personal adviser on a home visit.

Bringing the voluntary and community sector into more integrated forms of working has not always been straightforward, even in areas with long-standing traditions of collaboration. The challenges have been rendered more complex by new arrangements established for commissioning services, in particular at a time when local authority budgets are under severe pressure. This may entail local authority providers and VCS providers both being in the frame for the same contract; in this situation collaboration and competition become strange bedfellows, resulting in considerable strain being put on relationships.

One service has sought to address this by working closely with VCS organisations since June 2010 to prepare for re-commissioning (including de-commissioning) services in January 2011. This has involved extensive consultation with funded organisations and the young people they work with, to establish transparent goals and criteria for funding organisations and activities, and to



*In one of the case study authorities, the integration of TYS within the hubs was seen to have improved support for vulnerable young people...*

look at ideas for making savings. The process has been difficult, but is seen as a good example of statutory and voluntary services working as equal partners rather than the local authority alone making decisions.

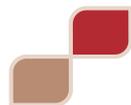
A key priority in integrating services has been better coordination of support for vulnerable young people. In one authority the youth service and youth offending service have jointly funded a targeted youth support coordinator post, which manages a combined prevention service for young people aged between eight and 19. This links into a targeted youth support panel, a multi-agency body offering schools practical support to keep challenging young people in mainstream education. Referrals are made through CAF or pre-CAF assessments. The same authority also pooled funding for programmes working with vulnerable young people in 2010–11, and has revised job descriptions to require all youth workers to undertake some targeted youth support.

In another authority TYS is coordinated through area multi-agency referral and coordination panels, and delivered through a combination of local authority and commissioned provision. A package of support is devised in response to individual needs; this could involve the substance misuse service, youth work, sex and relationships education, sports, information, advice and guidance, and provision for NEET young people.

In one of the case study authorities, the integration of TYS within the hubs was seen to have improved support for vulnerable young people, and as providing pathways between the YOS, specialist services and universal provision. Substantial progress has been made in developing TYS and some specific needs have been identified. These include creating more bespoke services for specific groups of young people, such as young care leavers, within the overall TYS offer, and engaging young people at the point of transition between primary and secondary school in order to identify and reduce the likelihood of difficulties later.

One of the boroughs has developed a two-tier approach to TYS: TYS panels in each school and a borough-wide multi-agency behaviour service for young people at higher levels of need. This model aims to keep intervention at the lowest possible level. The TYS panels assess the needs of individual students and identify appropriate action, including, where necessary, referring young people to the borough-wide behaviour service, which meets weekly. The behaviour service pre-dated IYS, but the greater focus on integration has meant that a wider range of partners have become involved, including those outside the local authority such as school nursing and CAMHS. A team of targeted youth workers, who are linked to schools and have a caseload of young people, was also set up in 2008 as part of the move towards integration. In addition, all youth workers are starting to take on a key working role through developing action plans with individual young people.

In another authority integration has led to marked improvements between professional staff working outside the formal education system and those working inside. Service managers have been able to identify key workers who can be designated to work with particular schools and the service has been able to pick up on the wider inclusion agenda. Stronger links have been made with the Education Transformation (previously known as School Improvement) Department. By putting youth workers and personal advisers together to work with colleges, steps are being taken to counter early drop-out (30% in the first year of courses). Managers report too that the closer integration of youth workers with TYS and information, advice and guidance has been effective because in combination the front-line workers are more consistent and have greater influence, especially with schools.



*The net has been strengthened so that fewer young people slip through.*

In providing more tailored responses to the needs of particular young people identified as at risk, most areas reported increasing use of CAF, but there were concerns about inconsistent approaches to their use, with staff in some services being more inclined to use them than those in others. In one authority, a county-wide voluntary organisation that plays an important role in the strategic partnership had increased its use of CAFs to between 200 and 300. This organisation reported that it was doing more signposting and encouraging young people back to school with support. The net has been strengthened so that fewer young people slip through. However, some front-line staff have expressed worries about completing the pre-assessment checklist. It is evidently important to use confident staff in conducting and leading on CAFs, for instance drawing on the skills of personal advisers. In one locality integration has been fostered by specific instruments and processes; for example the use of CAF by the family intervention project which has proved effective in working with young people in the context of their families where so many of the problems originate.



## 5. Outcomes and impact

*Two-thirds of respondents reported that the delivery of services to young people had improved as a result of greater integration and more than three quarters said that outcomes for young people had improved.*

### 5.1 Indicators of success

In the online survey conducted in 2010, just over half of all respondents said that they thought that the development of IYS had led to an improvement in service delivery (58%) and an improvement in outcomes for young people (55%). There was also a very positive response in terms of being able to evidence this improvement, with nearly two-thirds (63%) stating they were 'very confident' they could evidence how the development of an IYSS has affected service delivery for young people and only a slightly smaller proportion (55%) how this affected outcomes for young people. Metropolitan and London Boroughs were most confident about providing this evidence.

Overwhelmingly, local authorities that responded to the survey felt that the development of an IYS service in their area had improved provision and outcomes for young people, particularly with regard to information, advice and guidance (87%) and access to positive activities (86%).

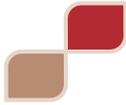
In thinking about the development of IYS overall, a little over a fifth of respondents (22%) felt that the impact was evident at the time. Slightly higher proportions felt this would become more evident in a year's time (29%) or in a year to two years' time (31%).

The online survey conducted in 2011 prompted a considerably lower response rate but replies to the same questions were also largely positive. Two-thirds of respondents reported that the delivery of services to young people had improved as a result of greater integration and more than three quarters said that outcomes for young people had improved. Around two-thirds were confident in their ability to produce evidence of these improvements. Half the respondents believed the impact was evident at the time.

In order to report on their performance, all of the case study authorities used the national indicators associated with PSA 14 ('children and young people on the path to success') – increasing participation in positive activities; and reducing first-time entrants to the juvenile justice system, the under-18 conception rate, substance misuse and the number of NEET young people. They all reported success against some of these measures, which they – in part, at least – attributed directly to greater integration of services.

In one authority the use of PSA 14 indicators provides a mixed picture as far as outcomes are concerned. Rates of teenage pregnancy and re-offending have increased while there have been decreases in numbers entering the youth justice system for the first time; and in NEET, level overall, although local hotspots remain. A lower number of young people are reported to be participating in positive activities, but this was said to be because of changes to the ways in which numbers are recorded.

In the authority using a hub-based model, outcomes have improved in three major areas: diverting young people from the criminal justice system; reducing the number of young people who are NEET – both of which are at their lowest level for five years; and improved access to substance misuse services. These improved outcomes were believed to be a direct result of integrated working and the development of the hubs. Youth work staff based in the hubs stressed their role in brokering young people's access to appropriate services, through developing trusting relationships, introducing young people to specialist services and cutting across bureaucracy.



*The number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system has reduced, as a result of TYS and a triage project...*

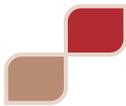
Targeted youth support panels are seen to be effective in bringing together enforcement and support services, and referrals have more than tripled over the past three years. TYS offers opportunities for intervention and prevention work with young people who would not meet traditional thresholds for statutory or specialist intervention, and gives the YOS access to a broader range of services and support for its young people and an exit strategy for young people coming to the end of statutory intervention.

The delivery of TYS through the hubs alongside other services is also seen as positive in offering young people ways of moving between targeted and universal provision without being labelled. The substance misuse service has become integrated into TYS over the past two years, with specialist staff based in each of the hubs and in the YOS. This has resulted in a significant increase in the numbers of young people receiving and completing treatment over the past two years, in contrast to previous poor performance in this area. The service's arrest referral scheme, developed in partnership with the police, identifies young people at risk of offending or re-offending and provides a programme of positive activities and support. The scheme has been particularly successful in reducing re-offending; 93 per cent of young people involved have not re-offended, contributing to an overall reduction in re-offending of 26 per cent over two years.

In another authority the level of participation in positive activities through council and commissioned provision has increased and more young people are gaining accreditation. Integrated work is seen to have helped reduce teenage pregnancy and enable the council to meet its target for reducing NEET levels. The number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system has reduced, as a result of TYS and a triage project – a partnership project with the police intended to divert young people from being taken to court. However, repeat offending is up and there seems to be a resurgence in gang-related activity; this is being addressed by the youth service through a specialist post responsible for a range of education and outreach work and collaboration with the police and other agencies.

Specific examples of improved outcomes in this authority included joint work to provide an intensive activity package for young people either in residential care returning to the borough for the holidays or, in one case, to keep them out of residential provision. It was thought that a year ago a particular young person would have fallen through the net and probably ended up in a secure unit, but because services had now developed greater understanding and trust they were able to work together to anticipate problems and put provision in place. Pooling budgets was also believed to have led to better quality services for young people. The youth service and social care provided joint funding for a holiday project for young people with very high care needs; again it was said that this would not have happened previously and it resulted in a much higher quality experience for the young people involved. Funds have also been brought together across sectors; for example the local strategic partnership has a sub-group bringing together different sectors and organisations including housing, the YMCA and the Salvation Army; this group has pooled budgets to give 20 formerly homeless young people additional support to enter the labour market.

Another authority's recent progress against the national indicators is generally good, although there is concern that the teenage pregnancy rate remains 'stubbornly high'. Integrated working is seen as underpinning its success in reducing NEET levels from nearly 10 per cent in 2009 to under 6 per cent in 2010. All agencies were encouraged to identify what they could do to engage and support NEET young people, and the voluntary organisation to which Connexions is outsourced led a range of work including outreach work, data cleansing, and identifying projects and activities which would appeal to NEET young people. TYS was also seen to have contributed to the



*There is more joint work in assessing the needs of local areas, in identifying the young people who are at risk and hotspots where interventions are needed.*

continued reduction in permanent exclusions, from 44 in 2008 to three in 2009. YOS performance data for April to June 2010 showed that all key performance indicators were on target for the first time in two years, with particularly good achievements in reducing custody rates, involving young people in education, employment and training and securing suitable housing.

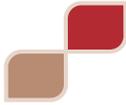
In one of the counties, courses targeting young people involved in arson-related activities were developed as a consequence of a partnership agreement between a local leisure trust and a team of professionals responsible for reducing anti-social behaviour. The result was a reduction in the number of incidents – previously running at 1,000 – by a half. The cost to the local fire and rescue service for each call-out had been around £1,000 and the courses cost £25,000 in total; the value of the initiative in cash terms is clear.

This kind of joined-up intervention was reinforced in the same locality by the IYS service providing street-based youth workers who offered diversionary activities, although the funding was short-lived and sparse so that the impact could not be long-term and sustainable. A further example of joined-up thinking is using football in the community to counter the incidence of anti-social behaviour. Young people had been vandalising property during the construction of a new housing development. The construction company provided funding for volunteer coaches to engage the young people in football training and competitions. Over 30 young people became involved and the vandalism was significantly reduced. This initiative resulted in the building of important social capital in the area. These coaches went on to enhance their skills in sex and relationships education and have now become ‘community coaches’ offering guidance and support to young people in the difficult dynamics of interpersonal relationships, thus responding to their needs more holistically. Links between the football coaches and local youth centres have been forged so that a number of young people are now putting themselves forward to become local football coaches too.

The success of integrated working is here attributed to a combination of staff attitudes and local structures and procedures, evident in the locality forum where service providers meet and share information and intelligence about what is going on in the neighbourhood and how they can help each other. They also use the forum as an opportunity to jointly plan activities in neighbourhoods. Forum members report there is a different ethos prevailing and much more collaborative work. Information on good practice is more readily shared and people are not so jealously guarding their achievements or the young people they work with. There is more joint work in assessing the needs of local areas, and in identifying the young people who are at risk and hotspots where interventions are needed. People more readily share their agendas, their targets and their resources. The proof of the value of integration lies in consistently good attendance at the forum meetings which would only occur when agencies are gaining good results from their involvement. The young people are certainly benefiting too, if indirectly, as judged by the reductions in anti-social behaviour and the increased participation in education, employment and training as well as in positive activities.

## **5.2 Data collection and sharing**

The importance of recording evidence of impact through a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, particularly for non-statutory services such as youth work, is now widely recognised in the sector and was a consistent theme in the recent submissions of oral evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education’s inquiry into services for young people. It is generally acknowledged that recording outcomes has improved, and the difficulties of recording progress through the development of relationships are recognised, but it is evident that some services



*Staff have become more assiduous in collecting data about young people's participation and achievements...*

are better at this than others. Service managers in two authorities highlighted the importance of improved data collection and better understanding of what interventions work in developing fit-for-purpose specifications for commissioning and outsourcing services.

In one service front-line staff reported that as a result of more integrated approaches to providing services for young people, they had become more rigorous when reflecting on and evaluating their interventions and monitoring the progress of young people. Staff have become more assiduous in collecting data about young people's participation and achievements, whether they were adopting long-established measures such as the Best Value performance indicators of reach, participation, recorded and accredited outcomes, or the more recent indicators of PSA 14.

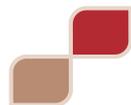
However, some discussions highlighted the difficulty in attributing cause to effect, particularly in distinguishing the contribution of different services and professionals when they are increasingly working together in partnership. Management information systems that require a single record may also mean that the contributions of some services go unrecognised; conversely, where systems are separate, different services may claim credit for the same outcome.

Data collection and sharing was identified as an important issue, and was said to have improved in most of the authorities. One authority is seeking to develop a database on vulnerable young people known to local agencies, in order to target resources more effectively. In another the TYS group is looking at how to share and use data across different services such as Connexions, housing, drugs and alcohol and teenage pregnancy. In another, data from IYS, wider services such as housing and the local further education college, and NEET and ward data is being cross-referenced to identify the most vulnerable young people in order to commission services to meet their needs. In another authority, a housing provider collects data across a range of services to plan its work, including developing a peer education project on homelessness.

The process of developing shared approaches to information sharing and confidentiality has sometimes been challenging. In one authority a multi-disciplinary group of practitioners and managers worked together to draw up a policy on data-sharing and confidentiality. This was intended to strike a balance between the need to know, in order to meet the duty of care and different professional stances on confidentiality, and the need to give guidance on when information must be shared. Staff and managers believed that this had increased their understanding of the concerns and constraints related to different professions. However, they offered examples of where this remains subject to debate, and identified this as one of the more challenging aspects of working across professional disciplines.

In one authority, integration in some areas has been greatly improved as a consequence of better sharing of information. For example, in one district the three team leaders (TYS, positive activities, and information, advice and guidance) work closely together. Each young person is logged on to the same database so that workers are able to pick young people up earlier and able to identify which colleagues in which services should be consulted. There is a more consistent reinforcement of key messages.

Front-line workers testify to the positive outcomes that have been achieved through drawing services more closely together. In general terms they recognise that signposting into and out of the youth support service has been improved and more reliable information is more widely shared. Consequently, there have been some very tangible examples of better support and development opportunities being provided for young people.



*Senior managers stressed that key indicators in the city were improving – higher rates of school attendance and big reductions in the number of NEET young people.*

One worker, for instance, was trying to provide support and development opportunities for a young mother-to-be and her partner who were living in a ground floor flat and could never have the window open because of the drug-dealing going on outside. The worker was concerned about the health and safety of the young couple. She set up a CAF and brought together the midwife, somebody from the housing association and a police officer to deal with a joined-up problem crying out for a joined-up solution. The housing people had no idea about the problem and, between themselves, the officers and workers from the different services found a workable and sustainable solution.

### 5.3 Different ways of managing

Front-line managers report that integration has changed the ways in which they manage projects, resources and staff. One reported that *'I am managing smarter and they are working smarter'* and, as a result, she was hitting her targets. She had been used to managing in small numbers and in isolation, but now she and her immediate colleagues in the district meet regularly as a management team so that performance management can be taken up by any of the three of them. She believed that co-location has improved communication and deepened trust.

Joint planning has become a feature of many integrated services. In one district in one of the local authorities, services have combined to plan interventions to achieve *Every Child Matters* outcomes, there are regular joint IYS management group meetings to which performance reports are submitted, which show which teams are engaging with particular groups of young people, with outcomes clearly identified. In another authority, a joint three-year IYS planning framework was produced in 2009, allowing all services to show how their work is contributing to PSA 14 and its associated national indicators, upon which the council's service priorities are based. The same authority published a 'headline data document' in January 2010, providing a basis for planning integrated services including those, such as teenage pregnancy and substance misuse, which are not structurally located within IYS.

Reorganisation in one local authority has resulted in designating district team leaders each to be responsible for a different aspect of the integrated youth offer. This has given the work greater focus and direction at district level so that interventions have become more targeted and staff are doing more preventative work. Similarly, in another authority the three area team leaders are each responsible for some borough-wide services.

In one local authority front-line managers reported that integration had enabled the local youth service to be 'slicker' – both in referring young people more quickly to appropriate services and also in getting other agencies involved in supporting key projects. This has meant that people using the service have one point of contact, and also reduces the risk of young people falling into a gap between services. Senior managers stressed that key indicators in the city were improving – higher rates of school attendance and big reductions in the number of NEET young people. They felt this was due to everyone making a difference through a 'cocktail of support'.



## 6. Future challenges

*The case study authorities are adopting a range of approaches to seek to secure universal provision.*

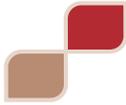
In most of the authorities visited, the major concern facing integrated youth support services looking forward was, not surprisingly, the massive cuts in funding and their likely impact on front-line provision. Those interviewed recognised that it will be a major struggle to maintain universal, open-access provision for young people when the priority is likely to be focusing services on those young people at greatest risk to themselves and their communities.

The case study authorities are adopting a range of approaches to seek to secure universal provision. This includes greater involvement of voluntary and neighbourhood groups with professional staff providing support and, in some areas, a renewed focus on 'growing our own staff'; including developing young people's skills and opportunities for supporting their younger peers. One authority is seeking to retain universal provision by outsourcing to a single provider an integrated package of youth support, including youth centres, detached work, the Duke of Edinburgh's award and universal information, advice and guidance. This proposal includes a service manager post with council-wide oversight in order to minimise the danger of creating a fragmented service.

At the time of the visits, the cuts were, in some authorities, already leading to reorganisation and potential weakening of service leadership and destabilisation of staff. In one authority where the move towards integration has been led by its directly-provided youth and community service, a decision has been taken to divest itself of this service by the end of the 2012–13 financial year. This has led to concerns that the coordination function will be removed, and the strategic push and legitimisation for integration will be weakened. In another authority, it was announced in November 2010 that targeted youth support would be removed from the integrated young people's service (established in April 2010) which itself now forms part of an all-through 0–19 service. As a result, staff and managers who had seen the benefits of integration, will now need to develop new sets of relationships across different services and divisions. Staff in this authority expressed regret and frustration that there had been insufficient time for the changes involved in integration to settle in and become consolidated.

But despite these very real concerns about cuts and changes to structures, staff and managers expressed their belief in the continued importance of multi-agency work. They believed that the process of integration, although inevitably involving challenges, has generally been successful, bringing together colleagues from different services to use their particular skills to improve provision for young people. Staff and managers alike expressed the belief that continuing to work in an integrated way is essential if services are to survive and develop in these difficult times.

Staff and managers also highlighted the importance of strong leadership in ensuring that services continue to work together to use reduced budgets creatively, rather than becoming defensive or competing with each other. Service managers expressed some concerns that the move towards localism will mean an end to national guidance on integration. This guidance, despite sometimes being perceived as too onerous and intrusive, has provided the justification, direction and encouragement local authorities and their partners need to move towards integration, including making the case to elected members who may sometimes be unsure of its benefits. However, some managers reported that their authority remains committed to retaining a coordinated approach to youth provision, for instance through maintaining current children's



*... many staff  
and managers  
from youth work  
backgrounds  
believed that  
integration had  
given them greater  
credibility...*

trust arrangements, continuing to produce a children and young people's plan in some form, and retaining PSA 14 (or similar) indicators as a framework for monitoring and reporting outcomes.

When considering future challenges, managers and staff identified some specific areas, such as retaining relationships with schools, the move towards localism, and ensuring that staff have appropriate skills and training.

Most services visited reported increasingly successful relationships with schools, particularly through targeted youth support arrangements using joined-up approaches to young people deemed to be at risk. Some of those interviewed expressed concern about schools' increasing autonomy and, more specifically, the loss of funding for extended services. This has created local partnerships to increase opportunities for young people, and there is a fear that these developments may stagnate without dedicated funding. However, many staff and managers from youth work backgrounds believed that integration had given them greater credibility and allowed them to demonstrate the value of their work to schools (and other services) and were cautiously optimistic that this partnership work would continue.

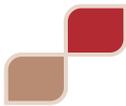
While many of the authorities have moved towards locality-based work, some concerns were expressed that a move towards decisions and choices being made at very local, neighbourhood level would lead to fragmented and uneven services. The moves towards localism and delegated authority for allocating resources may also put voluntary and community sector providers under pressure, even in areas where they have traditionally been major players. In one authority, for instance, sector representatives expressed concern that their limited capacity will prevent them from retaining a high profile in each of the 30 ward-level meetings where crucial decisions will be made.

The importance of training was highlighted during the research, and there were indications that the financial climate has already resulted in cuts to joint induction and training programmes. Staff and managers welcomed the previous government's investment in workforce development, such as the training programme for front-line managers, and identified future investment in workforce development as particularly important if, as expected, there is a shift towards more targeted work with the most vulnerable or challenging young people.

While we are still awaiting the coalition government's youth policy document, since this research was undertaken there have been some indications of the direction this will take. Speaking at the Positive for Youth summit in March 2011, Minister Tim Loughton stressed the importance of collaboration across different services and settings – including the involvement of young people themselves – to develop and sustain services for young people. He said that the government's vision for youth and youth services is based on four principles:

- a positive and active role for young people
- communities taking more responsibility for young people
- targeting funding that prioritises the most vulnerable children and young people and focuses on quality of outcomes
- achieving a greater diversity of service providers.<sup>5</sup>

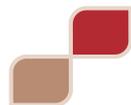
<sup>5</sup> The Minister's speech and accompanying material is available at  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/positive%20for%20youth/>



*The seven authorities provide evidence of how their commitment to integrating services, whatever form this has taken, has helped them 'think smarter'.*

The Minister acknowledged the cuts facing youth services, arguing that this means that services need to *'think smarter about the way we work... and the kind of partnerships we might create.'* The seven authorities visited for these case studies provide evidence of how their commitment to integrating services, whatever form this has taken, has helped them 'think smarter'. The benefits and achievements of integration include:

- A change in mindset through which working in partnership has become the default approach, and both services and young people are perceived as 'ours' rather than 'mine' or 'yours'. Professionals in different services have gained greater understanding about each others' roles and approaches, and have actively worked together to create a shared culture across previously separate services in order to improve provision for young people. This has necessitated honest, if sometimes challenging, discussions to clarify professional boundaries in order to ensure that staff from different services do not feel that their professional position is compromised and their specific skills are valued and used most effectively.
- More coordinated and effective support for vulnerable young people. This includes ensuring easier movement between universal and specialist provision and providing a single point of access to a range of services; identifying young people's needs at an early stage and bringing together a range of agencies to develop appropriate packages of support; a greater focus on working with young people within their families and supporting these families; and developing more effective approaches to collecting and sharing data and using this to identify needs and plan and review services.
- Engaging a much wider range of partners – both within and outside integrated youth support – to secure provision. Although successful partnerships predated the establishment of integrated services in many authorities, it was generally believed that integration has increased and strengthened joint working. Services have developed more rigorous and transparent approaches to commissioning. Joint work has helped dispel historical wariness or misunderstandings between some professions, for instance between youth work and schools or police. Staff and managers believed that the move towards integration has encouraged a more coordinated and purposeful approach to developing partnerships in order to extend opportunities for young people.
- Focusing on young people in their communities. IYS services reported a variety of groupings bringing together partners at neighbourhood levels – including, for example, elected members, voluntary and community groups, residents' associations, health, leisure trusts, fire and rescue, the police, and housing providers – to plan, deliver and review youth provision. In some areas, professional staff have been taking on a community development role, providing local groups with support in setting up provision and developing their skills in working with young people.
- Ensuring that young people are fully involved in identifying needs, deciding on priorities and assessing the quality of services. Managers and staff reported a variety of approaches to consulting young people and involving them in determining the nature of provision, although some services identified the need to embed this at a more strategic level. Young people's active involvement has been encouraged by national policy and initiatives such as the Youth Opportunity Fund and the *myplace* initiative, with the latter continuing to be supported by the coalition government. Although participation must respond to local needs and circumstances, those interviewed stressed the value of a national policy lead and accompanying funding in promoting young people's involvement in decisions about services.



*... the good practice developed during the process of integration offers a valuable basis for further development and improvement of services for young people.*

- Improving young people's outcomes. All services visited assessed their performance against the PSA 14 national indicators and reported success in at least some of these areas. They believed that the process of integration had contributed directly to improved outcomes for young people, for instance through joint planning and review at both managerial and operational levels; bringing together support and enforcement services through targeted youth support arrangements; pooling budgets for both positive activities and targeted provision, resulting in higher quality provision, identification of gaps and duplication, and increased value for money; brokering young people's access to appropriate services and activities; and sharing good practice in different services and settings.

There is a clear link between these achievements and public policy aspirations for young people. Local authorities and their partners will no doubt adopt different structures and delivery methods to meet the demands they face, but the good practice developed during the process of integration offers a valuable basis for further development and improvement of services for young people.



## **Appendix: local authorities visited for the case studies**

- Liverpool City Council
- Medway Council
- London Borough of Merton
- Newcastle City Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Wakefield Council
- Warwickshire County Council



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