

Achieving Excellence for Young People in Staffordshire: Key findings from stakeholder engagement

This report details of the findings from the Achieving Excellence for Young People stakeholder engagement.

1. Introduction:

- 1.1. Achieving excellence for young people is a key part of achieving Staffordshire County Council's priorities. Our vision is that **all young people in Staffordshire can achieve their full potential and will prosper, be healthy and well, and live safely within their communities.**
- 1.2. This generation of Staffordshire's young people are growing up in a world that has changed significantly in a short period of time. Developments in technology and the economy have changed how young people live in a fundamental way whilst at the same time the public sector is under pressure financially to become more efficient and reshape how it works.
- 1.3. In order to ensure young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential, the way in which Staffordshire County Council works needs to change to reflect these requirements and the changing environment young people now grow up in.
- 1.4. Improving outcomes for today's young people is a complicated task that is the joint responsibility of many people and organisations, from the young people themselves, their families and communities, as well as partners in the public, private and third sectors. Staffordshire County Council is just one of a number of organisations that needs to reshape make the most of the available resources for young people.
- 1.5. In response to this, there has been a significant increase in partnership activity across Staffordshire. Families, schools, key public sector partners, and the private, voluntary and independent sectors have come together with Staffordshire County Council through initiatives such as the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to establish how they can work even more effectively to improve outcomes for young people. Although there has been good progress, there is still more to be done to improve how partners work together for Staffordshire's young people.



2. Achieving Excellence for Young People:

- 2.1. Based on this position, Staffordshire County Council has used the early autumn of 2013 to engage in a dialogue with key stakeholders about the current youth offer, and explore how we may work together going forward to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of this and future generations of young people in Staffordshire. This review is part of a broader strategic approach looking at how we collectively commission better outcomes for young people.
- 2.2. To help structure these conversations, Staffordshire County Council has developed a vision and commissioning framework, that looks to capture the full range of our work with Young People. The aim of the framework is to improve long term outcomes and for young people by enabling individuals, families and communities to be more resilient and take a more active role in their communities.
- 2.3. We cannot achieve our vision **without the support and backing of the key stakeholders and partners who work with Staffordshire County Council.** Therefore, between 9th September and 31st October 2013, Staffordshire County Council used its existing networks and positive relationships to engage with key stakeholders on our commissioning framework.

3. Which stakeholders did we speak to?

- 3.1. The views of a number of key stakeholders were gathered, including:
 - Head teachers in secondary, middle and special schools
 - All District Council Leaders
 - The third sector - including VAST, SCIO, Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS), and Staffordshire Youth Action Council (YAK)
 - SCC departments and providers – including Youth and Community Service, Families First, YOS, and Public Health, Children’s Disability Service
 - Key partners including the Police (PCC) & Fire Services, Entrust, Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Sport Across Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent

(For a full list of people and organisations contacted and those that responded please see appendix A of this report).

- 3.2. When assessing the responses received it is evident that there are some gaps in representation where specific groups have been contacted but have not responded. This will need to be addressed as part of the next phase of engagement and the development of a comprehensive CIA. At the time of writing this report these gaps included Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) groups, SCIO and the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust.

4. What did our stakeholders say?

- 4.1. The key message received through the conversations with key stakeholders was that **overall there is broad support from stakeholders for the direction of travel, vision and commissioning principles.**
- 4.2. **There was recognition of the need to maintain targeted provision for vulnerable young people and the importance of affordable, accessible universal provision available in the community.** Specific issues regarding affordable, accessible universal provision included:
- It is important that young people have things to do outside of school that are affordable and varied enough to meet a range of needs. These will be different in different areas.
 - Information, advice and guidance (IAG), particularly regarding what is available for young people to do in their community, is critical. Stakeholders welcomed the intention to improve IAG and identified a gap around IAG for young carers and young people aged 19-25 with learning difficulties.
 - Effective transport is critical for connecting young people to the range of existing opportunities already in the community. The Your Staffordshire Card is a good example of how innovative use of transport schemes can benefit young people. However it is also acknowledged that communities may play a role here, for example an online parent transport network was suggested to support parents to transport their children to access opportunities in rural areas.
 - Engage with parents, particularly the hardest to reach families and those with multiple problems, to raise aspirations for young people and to encourage them to access available support.

4.3. **Stakeholders acknowledged that the current approach is no longer sustainable and that opportunities for young people must be delivered through multiagency partnership working and a pooling of local resources.** Specific issues included:

- Collaborative working between partners with families is seen as essential in achieving excellence for young people and avoiding disjointed and duplicated provision.
- The importance of communication between partners and good partnership working, particularly for those young people who are receiving targeted and specialist support.
- How partners work together to monitor performance around evidencing better outcomes for young people will be key to effective quality assurance and future planning.
- Support for the voluntary sector will help to ensure a range of opportunities are available for young people in this difficult economic climate. Better training opportunities for volunteers and support for accessing funding would help to maximise the contribution of the third sector to young people.
- Working with Public Health to further promote of prevention / early intervention and treatment services could increase access, improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities for young people.
- The positive role of SCVYS in providing advice for establishing youth groups, supporting training and DBS checks for staff was acknowledged in the feedback.
- Small Community Fund Grants are valued by small voluntary groups. Also, the Staffordshire Local Community Fund was mentioned as being successful, particularly in Tamworth, where it has supported a local boxing facility and team building trips for the past three years.
- A central database for equipment or resources that could be shared between providers and partners was proposed as a way of maximising capacity.

4.4. It is clear from the feedback that **there is a large and diverse amount of provision for young people that is being delivered independently of Staffordshire County Council that young people are already accessing.** Specific examples mentioned in the engagement include:

- Uniform groups such as the Brownies, Guides and Scouts
- The Young Farmers Group
- Leisure centre sports facilities, especially in the wake of the Olympics
- Skate parks across the county

4.5. **Stakeholders identified some areas of the current approach to young people that will need development if the vision of the new Youth Offer is to be achieved.**

These included:

- Improved transport options for young people, particularly in rural areas to ensure young people are connected to existing opportunities.
- More opportunities for specific groups of young people including looked after children, young people with disabilities, girls and young women, and young people from BME to improve outcomes.
- Increasing the amount and quality of information available to young people about existing opportunities and promoting this information further to increase awareness and access.

5. Building on this engagement:

5.1. The findings of this engagement will be used to inform our approach to achieving excellence for young people as well as a full public consultation with young people and their families, providers, staff and trade unions.



- 5.2. The findings of this engagement will also be used to inform a robust and comprehensive Community Impact Assessment (CIA). This CIA will ensure that the potential impacts of any proposed changes in the Youth Offer on different groups of people are analysed, and recommendations are made to mitigate any potentially negative impacts.

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Appendix A: Full list of organisations & people engaged with and responses:

The following individuals and organisations were contacted either in person, through workshop participation or via letter:

Name	Date Engaged
County Councillors	26.09.2013 - 13.09.2013
Staffordshire Youth Action Council	18.09.2013 & 26.10.2013
Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services	12.09.2013 & 14.10.2013
Staffordshire Young People's Service	27.09.2013
Schools & School Forum Mtgs	Middle schools forum – 20.09.13 18.09.2013 Special schools (all) 18.09.2013 Secondary schools (all)
VAST	18.09.2013
SCIO	18.09.2013 & 02.10.2013
Fire and Rescue Service	18.09.2013 & 12.09.2013
PCC Office	18.09.2013 & 23.10.2013
Staffordshire Police	18.09.2013 & 29.10.2013
Youth Offending Service	18.09.2013 08.10.2013
Entrust	19.09.2013 & 03.10.2013
Independent Futures	19.09.2013
Families First	18.09.2013 & 07.10.2013
Public Health Improvement and Wellbeing	18.09.2013 & 23.09.2013
SSOTP	18.09.2013
Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership	18.09.2013 & 08.10.2013
Children's Service Provider Forum (was ISD Board)	10.09.2013
Secondary Heads District Forums	18.09.2013
District & Borough Councils	13.09.2013
Parish Council Association	18.09.2013

Appendix B



CCGs	18.09.2013 & 25.09.2013
Local Strategic Partnerships	13.09.2013
Disability	13.09.2013 & 09.10.2013
LAC (Children's Voice Project)	13.09.2013
Travellers	13.09.2013 & 09.10.2013
Teenage Parents through Family Nurse Partnership (AWestlake)	13.09.2013 & 03.10.2013
Scouts	26.09.2013
Guides	26.09.2013
Tamworth Amateur Boxing Club	26.09.2013
WLCT	13.09.2013
Silkmere Partnership for Youth	13.09.2013