

Statement of Partnership Between Southwark Youth & Connexions Service and Voluntary Youth Service Organisations

Appendix 7

1. Introduction

- a) This document is a statement of partnership between the Southwark Youth & Connexions and Voluntary Youth Organisations (hereafter referred to as "VYO"). The aim of the partnership is to broaden the services and opportunities available to young people in Southwark, and to maximise the use of resources.
- b) The document does not represent a legally binding agreement - rather it is a statement of intent, agreed by the Youth & Connexions Service and the Voluntary Youth Organisations registered with it, describing the basis of co-operative action to meet the needs of young people. It is intended to help clarify some of the respective roles and responsibilities of the partners.
- c) Some VYOs are part of major national youth organisations (e.g., most of the uniformed groups); others are single and totally independent units. Within existing resources, the level of advice, support and practical or financial assistance which the Youth & Connexions Service is able to provide to different organisations is likely to vary greatly. Within this statement of partnership there is an understanding that the level of commitment/obligations of VYOs to the Youth & Connexions Service will be broadly in proportion to the level of resources available, on the one hand and secondly with due respect to capacity.

2. Policies

- a) The policies of VYOs are determined by their Management Committees and/or the national body of which they are part. VYOs undertake to ensure that all such policies are broadly compatible with those of the Youth & Connexions Service.
- b) The Youth & Connexions Service undertakes to inform relevant VYOs of those policy proposals which may affect their work, and where appropriate and possible within the general procedures of the Council, to provide opportunity for VYOs to comment on them prior to decisions being taken.
- c) In the spirit of the partnership between the Youth & Connexions Service and VYOs, it is assumed that policies and targets for the Youth Service as a whole will be both informed by and notified to VYOs. The Youth & Connexions Service will continue to look for opportunities to extend and improve its consultative procedures. Equally, VYOs recognise their responsibility to be proactive in informing the Youth & Connexions Service of any policy developments within their own organisations and in raising issues of interest and concern.

3. Age Range

The Youth & Connexions Service presently works with those aged 11-19 years, with priority being given to those 13-19 years. VYOs are free to work with young people outside this age range, but the Youth & Connexions Service cannot at present guarantee resources for such work, nor require reports, statistical returns etc.

4. Equal Opportunities

Commitments to Equal Opportunities policy and practice is an essential component of all youth service work. VYOs generally will seek to operate accordingly, within policy guidelines established by any national body of which they are part or which have been adopted locally. Where they are in receipt of resources from the Council, VYOs are responsible for ensuring that they produce, and undertake all aspects of their work in accordance with, an Equal Opportunities Policy that is compatible with that of Southwark Council. The Council will seek to make available at appropriate levels, range of information, advice, training and practical support which will assist VYOs to operate effectively in relation to the delivery of equal opportunity policies.

5. Legal Requirements

There is a range of legal requirements with which all sectors must comply. Where the Youth & Connexions Service and VYOs are working in partnership (particularly where Council staff have been seconded to a VYO), it is likely that both parties will have a degree of legal liability. Within this document it is neither possible nor appropriate to make comprehensive definitive statements. Specific problems would need to be discussed between the parties and, as necessary, appropriate legal advice obtained.

However, in more general terms, all VYOs are responsible for ensuring that they are properly and legally constituted, produce annual accounts, and comply with relevant legislation, such as child protection and health and safety considerations.

In addition to fulfilling its own legal obligations, the Youth & Connexions Service will endeavour to provide information, advice and/or training to assist VYOs to be aware of, and comply with relevant legislation.

6. Youth Work Programmes

- a) In line with the transforming youth work guidelines, the Youth & Connexions Service will publish an annual Youth Service Plan detailing its priority

objectives for young people's services and how they are to be delivered across the Borough.

- b) VYOs are responsible for determining their own youth work programmes, but in doing so will take into account the Youth Service's policies, priorities, criteria and any advice offered by the Council, as a result of grant aid.
- c) Any targets for particular units in the Voluntary Sector will be fully discussed and the views of the Management Committees of the units concerned taken on board as part of the annual allocation of staffing resources (see para 7 below).

7. Resources

- a) VYOs are responsible to obtain the resources they need to undertake their work and for satisfying the criteria laid down by funding bodies, including the Council, where this applies.
- b) In its role as a service provider, Southwark Council recognises the value of VYOs and undertakes to use a proportion of the Youth Service budget to provide resources for VYOs.
- c) The allocation of staffing resources will be reviewed annually by the Youth & Connexions Service mainly as part of the annual development plan and the Council's own budget review process. Any intention to withdraw staffing posts (where this applies) from VYOs will be notified in writing to the Chair of the Management Committee prior to any decision being taken; an opportunity will be provided for the VYO to present its views to the Youth & Connexions Service. The VYO shall be given a minimum of three months' notice of any decision to withdraw a full-time post (or its equivalent funding). Should a VYO decide, for any reason, that it no longer wishes to have resources from the Youth & Connexions Service, the Chair of the Management Committee will give at least three months' notice.
- d) The allocation of staffing resources will be reviewed annually, and will reflect priorities and targets stated in the Youth Service Plan (see para.6). VYOs will be required to complete a Unit plan, showing the youth work programme for which the resources will be used. Any variations to the allocation and/or programme, at any time during the year, shall be discussed and agreed by the VYO and the Youth & Connexions Service.
- e) The responsibility for the recruitment and selection of staff not seconded by the Council will rest with the VYO. The management committee will have total responsibility for all employment implications of any appointment secured through grant aid.
- f) For grant aid, the Council will require the completion of an application form, monitoring form and copies of audited accounts (see Conditions of Grant Aid [COGA]).

8. Management of seconded staff

- a) The management of staff seconded by the Youth & Connexions Service to VYOs is a shared responsibility, requiring an active partnership between Management Committee and Youth & Connexions Service Officers.
- b) The VYO Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that:
 - i) appropriate arrangements for the day to day management of staff have been made. Normally this will mean nominating a member of the Management Committee (or appropriate other person on their behalf) to supervise and liaise with the Youth Worker in Charge, who will be responsible for supervising all other part-time staff.
 - ii) all staff are aware of the organisation's policies, priorities, administrative procedures, and relevant Council requirements (e.g. COGA)
 - iii) The Youth & Connexions Service is advised of, and consulted on, any significant staff problems, particularly in relation to matters of a disciplinary or grievance nature.
 - iv) copies of Management Committee Minutes, workers' reports, etc., are sent to the Youth & Connexions Service.
- c) Southwark Council, as employer, is ultimately responsible for ensuring the satisfactory performance of seconded staff. To this end the Council will;
 - i) undertake employment/personnel matters including appointment, payment, issuing job description, disciplinary and grievance procedures, ensuring that VYO Management Committees will be invited to be part of the interviewing panel for the appointment of full-time staff.
 - ii) be responsible for the provision of staff training
 - iii) provide information, advice and guidance to Management Committees to enable them to carry out the responsibilities listed in para 8b above.

9. Evaluation

- a) VYOs in receipt of grant aid from the Council undertake to provide:
 - i) quarterly statistical information
 - ii) an annual review containing details of work undertaken and an evaluation of its effectiveness
 - iii) such other information as may reasonably be required (taking into account the level of resources provided)
- b) The Youth & Connexions Service, recognising the constraints within which VYOs work, undertakes to provide VYOs with reasonable, adequate notice of statistical or evaluative information required, and to provide professional advice and guidance, as requested.
- c) It is expected that the Youth & Connexions Service and VYOs will consider together the effectiveness of work undertaken, reflecting a spirit of partnership and mutual accountability. All registered VYOs will be

represented on the Local Youth Service Chairs Forum, which will oversee the implementation of the Partnership Agreement.

- d) In the spirit of partnership, the Youth & Connexions Service will organise an annual 'strategic' event where VYO's in receipt of grant aid will be expected to attend as a condition of the funding arrangements, to evaluate the Youth Service Plan.