

# **Youth & Policy**

**Youth Work:  
A Manifesto For Our Times**

*Bernard Davies*

**Reprinted from *Youth & Policy*  
Number 88  
Summer 2005**



**The National Youth Agency**



# Youth Work: A Manifesto For Our Times

**Bernard Davies**

*In this Special Feature, Bernard Davies sets out what he judges to be the most important and salient features of the activity which names itself 'Youth Work'. Davies brings to bear the full weight of his broad and historically informed experience of practice, teaching, and research to assess the significance of the impact of the contemporary policy environment. He argues that it is crucial that youth work identifies and clarifies those aspects of its practice which distinguish it from other approaches to work with young people and the Manifesto is offered as a contribution to that process. Davies believes that if those associated with the work undertake this task effectively, youth work might grow and flourish in the new context. If practitioners and intellectuals do not take up this challenge, there is a danger that youth work might lose what little authority it already has to address the needs and interests of young people.*

*Davies has been the most significant practitioner and intellectual in the field of youth work in the last fifty years. His understanding of the nature of the work is based upon an enduring sympathy for the position of young people in society. This sympathy is informed by a systematic and critical understanding of the structural position which they inhabit as young people and as members of different social groups in an unequal and dynamic world. The Manifesto is not presented by Davies as a means of supporting youth work as a profession for its own sake, but because his understanding of the possibilities of the approach indicate that youth work at its best can offer a service to young people which is educational in the fullest meaning of that term and can make a contribution to social justice. Youth work which knows itself, is successful because it knows young people, and knows its own limits, tensions, possibilities and contradictions in relation to the interests of young people in a social, economic and political context.*

*Youth and Policy is publishing this Manifesto at an important juncture in the history of youth work. The publication of the Green Paper, 'Youth Matters' in July of this year sets the terms of the emerging debate within parameters decided by politicians. The next issue of the journal will be devoted to such debates. The Manifesto offered by Bernard Davies, (which will also be published by The National Youth Agency as a separate offprint), sets the scene for another debate, one conducted in the terms set by those involved in the youth work field. It is this which must surely inform the terms in which the Green Paper is*



# Youth Work: A Manifesto For Our Times

*Bernard Davies*

## The current policy context

**H**as youth work ever been so fashionable – or at greater risk? All over the country services which in the past could barely give it the time of day have suddenly discovered that it can reach previously (for them) unreached and unreachable parts of the adolescent population – and help them ‘consult’ on what they should be doing. Yet these conversions are often highly conditional – even perhaps illusory. Because, in pursuit of their most pressing and precious ‘outcomes’, these agencies frequently end up demanding a cherry-picked, some might say a de-rooted, version of the practice that so attracts them.

### *The enthusiasts ...*

Expectations of youth work rose steadily throughout the 1990s. After 1997 it was ratcheted up still further by New Labour’s increasing pressure on public services to tackle social inclusion. For example:

- In 1993 the Department for Education and Employment funded a three-year ‘youth action scheme’ to test the Youth Service’s ability to reduce young people’s offending (France and Wiles, 1996).
- Between 1996 and 1998 the Home Office invested in research aimed at establishing youth work’s potential for preventing drugs misuse. (Ward and Rhodes, undated).
- Youth work was seen as important for addressing a range of other health concerns, including young people’s sexual health. (See for example Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2001).
- The Neighbourhood Support Fund, resourced to the tune of £70M over its two three-year phases, depended very heavily on youth work methods for reaching and sustaining engagement with that 9% of young people identified as NEET – not in education, employment or training. (Davies and Docking, 2004).
- The Cattle Report (2002) on the 2001 northern cities’ ‘race riots’ identified effective youth work provision as vital for increasing ‘social cohesion’.
- Perhaps most high profile of all, after a rather grudging start, the Connexions Service came to rely more and more on its youth workers for providing key elements of its remit – particularly developmental opportunities and targeted support for more vulnerable young people.

This new youth work chic is not merely flattering. It also seems to underwrite youth work’s survival and even perhaps to promise finally to move it from the recreational margins of public provision for young people. Yet it is within this very possibility that the sharpest paradox lies. Understandably, as well as consultation with their more elusive (non)-users, what these new

courtiers most want from youth work is its *product*: contact with and impacts on young people seen as 'on the edge of – but not yet in – crisis' (Lloyd, 2005). Often, however, they have much less patience with the process which generates these outcomes: with suggestions that for youth work, the medium is a crucial part of the message, that its *hidden* curriculum of inter-personal interaction (especially young person with young person but also young person with adult) is as important for generating the desired outcomes as its declared and overt content.

In addition to substantial anecdotal evidence coming from the field, two recent major pieces of research support this view. The 2004 national study of street-based youth work identified 'a mismatch between the specificity of many of the funding streams supporting street-based work and the complex realities of the field in which it is undertaken'. It concluded that the Department for Education and Skills' *Transforming Youth Work* policy-initiatives were 'moving street-based youth work in the direction of an even more tightly focused approach' and suggested 'the need for greater recognition amongst policy-makers, funders and agency partners of the ... diverse timescales required for effective practice' (Crimmens et al., 2004: 73-4. See also Spence, 2004, who uses evidence from this study to develop arguments parallel to those advanced in this paper). The 2004 national evaluation of the impact of youth work also noted that because 'what is often referred to as "the youth work process" ... is not always evident or transparent' other non-youth work professionals can be left 'unclear and at worst sceptical about what youth workers do' (Merton et al., 2004: 34).

Like any educational endeavour, youth work is value-based – explicit about its duty of care for individuals; committed to their greater self-realisation; concerned to help maximise their potential contribution to the greater good. On occasions, these values are presented as defining youth work's distinctiveness. However this position is hard to sustain. If proof of this were needed, it has come, instantly and strongly, in the way youth work, like all the helping professions, has fallen over itself to embrace the five key outcomes for children and young people laid down by the 2004 Children Act: to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to community and society and achieve economic well-being. Here as in most similar contexts youth work's value-base hardly acts as its distinguishing feature.

The central arguments of this paper, therefore are twofold. One is that, though (of course) it is a value-based practice, and indeed that some of these values are embedded in the methods it chooses to prioritise, what distinguishes youth work from other related and often overlapping practices is its methods: *how* it seeks to express those values, and particularly its *process*. The second is that unless partners understand that this is what they are buying into, they are likely to end up with something which isn't youth work at all. And the paradox in *this* is that, by not getting the pay-offs which first made youth work seem so alluring, they are setting it up to fail. This will surely leave youth work even less credible than it was before they threw their conditional embrace around it.

A more pessimistic but not, I believe, wholly unrealistic reading of the current policy situation is that this could easily happen in the coming months and years. Faced with high priority Government targets which, at minimal cost and often via time-limited funding, need to be met yesterday, many of youth work's new allies have been showing irritation (at best) with how long the process takes and with how labour-intensive it is, especially for engaging a more

obstreperous young clientele. Moreover, as we shall see later, this is happening just as the terms of engagement, particularly leverage on resources, are increasingly being set by non-youth work agencies.

### **... and the sceptics**

With struggles over the future of youth work going on concurrently in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the enthusiasm for youth work in England seems to run out fastest at some of the highest levels of policy making. In part this may be because the policy makers have failed to understand its potential in work with young people. However, it is possible too, that the ministerial ambivalence stems from the opposite – a sense that the way youth work goes about its business may not be wholly supportive of key government agendas.

And so, asked by a youth worker to clarify where youth work might best fit into the structures emerging from the new Children Act, England's then Minister for Children and Youth judged this as 'symptomatic of a flawed attitude' and of a reliance on 'a silo approach' (Barrett, 2004). Even within a generally affirming ministerial policy statement on youth work, 'evidence' which purports to show youth club attendance as a potentially negative influence is preferred (Hodge 2005) over very recent and substantial findings by direct studies of youth work (Crimmens et al., 2004; Merton et al., 2004), one of these funded by the Minister's own Department.

Even more soundly based national policy analyses can display similar blank spots about youth work. Thus, in a search for more effective responses to disadvantaged 16-25 year olds, the Social Exclusion Unit is examining 'practical approaches that get results by successfully considering how young adults think and behave', that is, practices which start where young people are starting, intellectually and emotionally. One of this paper's main arguments is that such starting points, broadly defined, constitute a key defining principle – even the *raison d'être* – of all youth work.

Given the downward pressures from central government, these absences of mind are, not surprisingly, being replicated in local policy-making and provision. In England, even as extended schools are being pushed as the hub of all community provision, 'youth workers' operating within school settings can still find themselves simply filling resource gaps in the teaching or counselling of lower stream pupils or in sports coaching. In the name of 'community safety' youth workers are constantly being pressed to douse teenage 'hot spots' in local neighbourhoods. In the longer run, the demands of Children and Young People's Trusts (CYPTs) heavily committed to younger children and to child protection, threaten even more distorting effects. Indeed, even as the trusts were forming, anxieties were being voiced that 'hungry predators from education and social services will train their beady eyes on Youth Service money' (Barrett, 2005).

However, money, though vital, is not always the organisational predator's only prey. Especially in the days of target-driven, partnership-based service delivery, the scent of adaptable methods can also be attractive, not least for those policy makers and managers with strong territorial instincts. When the chase is over, some of the most easily digestible parts of youth work may have survived. But again the question has to be asked: will these filleted extracts still

be recognisable and effective as *youth work*? And, perhaps even more telling ultimately, how much will be left of the Youth Service – the only agency which, with all its flaws, has had an explicit public remit to nurture and develop this practice as a distinctive way of working with young people?

Nor, within all of this would it be wise for the voluntary and community sector organisations to be too complacent. In the context of increasing uncertainty, not to say pessimism, within statutory services, government (central and local), may seem to be offering them a bright new (and secure) future by courting them to take over whole services. Ultimately however, the same bottom-line principle will operate here too: that the piper calls the tune. Who then will guarantee that the practice they are expected to deliver is recognisably ‘youth work’?

Finally, amidst these pressures, how will youth work survive the new drive to develop a ‘common core of skills and knowledge’ for work with children and young people as envisaged by the new Children’s Workforce Strategy? This development, we are being assured, does not mean that ‘the Government is trying to dragoon all professions into one box’ or ‘to produce a Jack-of-all-trades practitioner’ (Rogers, 2005). A less rhetorical and more grounded safeguard may be provided too, by the recent decision to move towards a three-year degree entry qualification for youth work, validated through the Youth Service’s own approval mechanisms.

Nonetheless, those of us who remember the rush to ‘genericism’ and the consequent loss of specialist expertise which resulted from the Seebohm reorganisation of social services in the 1970s are bound to approach such developments with trepidation. In general what they risk, perhaps out of a PC-type fear of seeming to claim king-of-the-jungle status in professional circles, is a denial of professional difference. Yet such distinctions are vital if ‘the client’ (in this case young people) is to be offered a genuine choice of service. Youth workers no less than other professional practitioners need to be confident that, in going into partnership with teachers, social workers, the police and others, they can make a *complementary* contribution to young people’s support and development rather than bland lowest-common-denominator responses.

More particularly, once the bargaining begins on what should be defined in as the ‘common’ skill base, youth work is unlikely to be operating on a level playing field. Given the present politics and priorities of the new world of children and young people’s services, the skills and knowledge of some practices are bound to be seen as more equal than others. Despite its current popularity, youth work is unlikely to be one of those. This again raises the question: in order to avoid its marginalisation to the point of extinction, how best can we ensure that, within this new ‘coherent’ workforce, its distinctive potential is clearly and strongly presented, and represented?

## **Why a manifesto – and in what form?**

Whether the starting point is an enthusiasm which is under-informed and over-simple, or under-whelming and dismissive, the messages for youth workers are still largely the same. In making the case for youth work, their most convincing supporting evidence will come through practising in ways in which the quality and impact speak for themselves – particularly through

the voices of young people. At the same time, where partners and commissioner of services rule, youth workers as never before are going to have to be clear, confident and articulate about just what this practice is and how it can make its distinctive (which of course is not the same as saying superior) contribution. In doing this the pressure will be on particularly to explain what they mean by 'process' and what it means to be 'process-driven'.

Nor will it any longer do for youth workers to reach for their usual crutch: 'It's the relationships, stupid!' when professional colleagues and agency partners ask, as they so often do, what is this youth work. The need is for an explicit and coherent 'manifesto' which by unpacking such slogans, spells out the practice's essential features, and then from these, without claiming superiority, identifies those which set it apart from other practices.

## In support of critical debate

What follows is a personal attempt to construct such a statement. It is quite deliberately purist, setting out a strongly principled position. It does this in the full knowledge that what is verbalised and conceptualised here is often far from the reality of practice on the ground. It also accepts that, even in agencies where such purism is not or cannot be applied, 'youth work approaches' or 'a youth work style' are being used – in schools, in youth offending teams and health promotion and drug projects, with young parents; and that, despite some very different starting points and operating principles, these are adding considerable value to what is being done.

In what follows, however, extended responses are offered to a series of leading questions with a view to setting out youth work's own 'defining characteristics'. The questions are:

- ▶ *Have young people **chosen** to become involved – is their engagement voluntary?*
- ▶ *Is the practice proactively seeking to tip **balances of power in young people's favour**?*
- ▶ *Are **young people perceived and received as young people** rather than, as a requirement, through the filter of a range of adult-imposed labels?*
- ▶ *Is the practice **starting where young people are starting** – particularly with their expectation that they will be able to relax, meet friends and have fun?*
- ▶ *Is a key focus of the practice on **the young person as an individual**?*
- ▶ *Is the practice respectful of and actively responsive to **young people's peer networks**?*
- ▶ *Is the practice respectful of and actively responsive to **young people's wider community and cultural identities** and, where young people choose, is it seeking to help them strengthen these?*
- ▶ *Is the practice seeking to **go beyond where young people start**, in particular by encouraging them to be outward looking, critical and creative in their responses to their experience and the world around them?*
- ▶ *Is the practice concerned with **how young people feel** and as well as with what they know and can do?*

The responses to these questions are quite deliberately presented in an assertive and hard-line way. One reason for this is that, as a manifesto should, the paper aims to make clear some bottom-line positions – in this case, to important professional worlds outside youth work.

Another, equally unashamedly, is to try and concentrate minds within youth work on what at this moment they need to be stating, and defending.

The assertiveness should not deceive, however. For me, this is the latest stage in work which has been in progress for over twenty-five years and which, in some form, has appeared and indeed been reworked in previously published papers and articles (see for example Davies, 1979; 1981; 1999). Its use in a government policy statement (Department for Education and Skills, 2002: 20) has perhaps suggested that one element of it has an (undeserved) finality. Nonetheless, it is offered here for critical use by colleagues concerned to develop their own explanations of youth work and its distinctive style and methodology.

Given the historical moment in which youth work now finds itself, I hope the offer will be taken up widely. I particularly hope it will encourage wide structured as well as informal debate amongst youth workers, managers and policy-makers. A key aim of such debates could be to produce explicit 'youth work statements' addressed to potential partners and other professionals, to complement and underpin the 'curriculum statements' now adopted by most Youth Services. Maybe, too, as a challenging extension of the project, some parts of it can even be developed in a language which would encourage some parallel exchanges with young people.

## Interrogating practice: towards a clarification of youth work's defining features

► *Have young people **chosen** to become involved – is their engagement voluntary?.*

Though it has now become a focus of sharp debate and indeed dissension, including amongst youth workers themselves, the principle of young people's voluntary participation is a – perhaps *the* – defining feature of youth work. The basis for this position is not simply theoretical or ideological, as has sometimes been asserted – 'conservative' or bloody-minded youth workers holding onto a belief which has passed its sell-by date. Rather, it is rooted in the historical fact, and it is a fact, that such 'voluntaryism' has from the start shaped the development of the *practice* and especially its process. This was true even in periods when provision was largely dependent on the patronage of the privileged; and it continues to be true today within a state-dominated Youth Service.

- 'The voluntary principle' ensures that, in their dealings with the institutions which provide youth work and with the practitioners who deliver it face-to-face, young people possess and retain a degree of *power* which is *intrinsic to the practice*. Both adult and young person know that at any point the young person can just walk away, thereby leaving the adult powerless to have any influence on them. Perhaps uniquely in our society's public provision for young people, this power is therefore not just a concession made to the young by benevolent adults who see benefits for themselves in 'letting the young have their say'. Young people have this power (limited and negative though it may often be) because of a role and a status which are *structured into* their relationships with the adult providers.
- Because this is the starting point, practitioners have no choice but to *negotiate* with young people. Moreover, this cannot just be a 'tactical' manoeuvre concerned only (as for

example often in teaching) with easing them through ‘boring’ but pre-set and essential tasks in order to arrive later at the more interesting or rewarding ones. The youth work negotiation has to be based on a built-in long-term strategy and requires an openness to a real give-and-take which will probably have to be sustained throughout the whole period of the young person-adult engagement. Only then are the young people likely to stay long enough to become exposed to experiential opportunities which might (though they might not) interest and benefit them – and then to sustain a personally committed rather than a merely compliant participation.

- The voluntary principle also impacts significantly on the *content* of the youth work providers’ ‘offer’ to young people. Because historically young people have engaged in youth work ‘in their own’ time’, and because many still do, built deep into the youth worker psyche is the presumption that s/he must deliver returns which young people will personally experience as valuable. Moreover, integrally linked with the requirement to negotiate, ‘valuable’ here has often to mean: in its own right, here-and-now or at least pretty soon, and not just as a means to later value or gain. For young people attending in their ‘time off’, youth workers cannot assume that gratification delayed too long is an option – of the kind for example which many (though clearly not all) pupils are prepared to settle for on the promise that hard work today, even on syllabuses experienced as ‘irrelevant’, will in due course bring them good qualifications and well paid jobs.
- The voluntary principle also has significant impact on youth work’s ‘hidden’ curriculum, on the way adult and young people each see each other and interact. For, here too youth work *requires* a greater parity of esteem and treatment than most other adult provider-young person exchanges *impose*. Young people constantly assert that, in their encounters with adults, they expect to be respected for who they are, with abilities, ideas, opinions and experiences of their own and with a right to be listened to and have a say in what is decided. Their (relative) power in their relationships with youth work providers adds considerably to the force of these demands since any youth worker who patronises, rides roughshod over or simply ignores them is liable to find her or himself without a clientele to work with.

In the conditions, especially the funding climate, in which youth work currently operates, youth workers are often now having to apply their distinctive skills to in effect, convert young people’s enforced attendance into a form of ‘voluntary’ participation. Crucial amongst these skills are likely to be those of building trusting relationships with young people based on mutual respect, engaging young people in as many decisions about content and method as are compatible with laid down curricula and available resources; and nurturing their motivation to take on unfamiliar and taxing experiences (see for example Merton et al., 2004, para 9.4.5: 28). Evidence is now accumulating that in many areas and projects such approaches are being made to work. This however should not be taken as proof that the voluntary principle is no longer relevant. Rather it needs to be understood mainly as an additional pressure on practitioners to negotiate and re-negotiate the terms of engagement with young people so that youth work’s distinctive style and processes can be allowed to develop.

- ▶ *Is the practice proactively seeking to **tip balances of power in young people’s favour?***

The voluntary principle forces youth workers to confront questions of power – who has it, how much, used in what ways? – as a central feature of their relations with young people. These are issues which for many policy-makers and agencies are today newly fashionable, emerging in debates on how to get young people to ‘participate’, how to ‘empower’ them, how to give them a role in decision-making. For the youth worker, such goals are not incidental luxuries, the icing on the cake. Responses to them may not be, indeed usually will not be, embodied in formal constitutions and machinery. Nonetheless, youth workers’ everyday routine exchanges with the young people they meet have to be shaped from the start and throughout, by participatory principles, by the mutuality of respect and influence which these assume – that is, by a recognition that in the end young people are the most influential and active agents in the unfolding of their own lives.

The power which young people can and do actually exercise within the youth work relationship is, of course, relative. It is relative, still, to the degree of especially formal power (for example over money, buildings and equipment) which the youth worker retains within that relationship. And, even more significantly, it is relative to young people’s very limited formal power, sometimes coming close to powerlessness, in other spheres of their lives – at home, within education more widely, within employment and (unless they have real money in their pockets) even in their leisure. Indeed, despite high profile official initiatives to foster their ‘empowerment’, the fundamental shifts which have occurred over the past two to three decades in the labour market, the benefit system and, now, higher education mean that their hold on real material and even psychological power over their lives has weakened still further.

Youth work’s commitment to at least tipping these balances of power a little in young people’s favour needs to be seen in this contemporary context. But it needs to be understood, too, in a much broader way: explained bluntly as ‘young people are citizens, too’. Though apparently a simple notion, some might say an over-simple slogan, it needs to be asserted uncompromisingly at a time when so many current policies assume that, just because young people (and indeed children) need to be prepared for citizenship, they are therefore not *already* citizens. Youth work’s starting proposition, however, is an entirely contrary one. This insists that the need for preparation and support cannot be elided into a denial that young people, now, possess the same basic civil and legal rights as their elders. At a time when the moral panic over ‘anti-social behaviour’ is repeatedly resulting in just such a denial, re-affirming this proposition has never been more urgent.

In such circumstances, youth work’s commitment to tipping balances of power in young people’s favour emerges as particularly striking, especially since, again exceptionally if not uniquely, it has in some form been embedded in its public remit throughout its history. As such, it has therefore not *just* been a grudging concession. Nor has it just been a tactical manoeuvre to convince a potential clientele to ‘give youth work a chance’ or to draw them into adult-designed and directed programmes. Rather, it exists as an integral element of the practice, there in its own right, as inescapable for youth work as a subject syllabus is for a teacher or a diversion curriculum is for a youth offending team member or as procedures for responding to abuse are for a child protection social worker. Within the delivery of youth work, ensuring situations exist or develop in which young people will take decisions, follow them through and take responsibility for their consequences is therefore not just a means to

an end. It is an end in its own right, to be deliberately pursued including, as appropriate for the young people, in arenas without as well as within the youth work context.

► Are **young people perceived and received as young people** rather than, as a requirement, through the filter of adult-imposed labels?

Youth work can and does work with 'special groups', including focusing on their specialist interests, needs and concerns. The young people who are engaged may also take a variety of routes to that engagement, including on occasions referral from a non-youth work agency required to concentrate only on those carrying a specific label.

For youth work, however, those labels do not constitute the *raison d'être* of the work. That resides solely in the fact that those who arrive belong to a section of the population which is at a particular point in the life cycle – at a particular stage in their personal development, with the needs, demands and opportunities that creates. This in turn assumes a holistic perception of and set of responses to those needs, demands and opportunities. The practice which emerges will be therefore, as far as possible, unblinkered by presenting and usually pejorative labels which are usually 'laid on' by powerful adults and adult institutions and which threaten to mask or even obliterate personal characteristics within broad classifications.

As always in such practices, this stance is not without its contradictions. One of the trickiest is that 'young people' – or 'youth', or 'teenager', or 'adolescent'- has become, especially in today's climate, one of the more pejorative of labels. Once attached, it is liable to have the same kinds of consequences as any other such prior and rigid categorisation of individuals: prejudgement of their personalities and behaviour; a lowering of expectations of them; defensive rather than expansive and affirmative responses to them.

Youth work seeks to guard against such negative effects of the 'young person' label in a number of ways. Most of these are captured later as other key constituent elements of youth work are explored – particularly in its adoption of potentiality rather than deficiency models of 'youth' and its respect for and active response to young people's self-chosen peer and wider community and cultural identities.

► Is the practice **starting where young people are starting** – particularly with their expectation that they will be able to relax, meet friends and have fun?

'Connect, only connect' – with the person, what they know, how they feel, what they want from the encounter – is the tactic of any educational enterprise aiming at 'owned' and transferable learning. In more formal educational environments like schools, colleges and universities the main connection sought is likely to be with the learner's intellectual starting points. In these environments, but perhaps especially in non-formal educational settings, emotional connections will also be seen as important, focusing for example on the learners' levels of confidence, on their self-esteem or on the 'baggage' they bring with them from past schooling or current family experiences.

The youth worker, too, seeks connections with these starting points. In youth work however, other connections are also vital. One, initially and maybe on-going, will be with young

people's own 'territory', with the physical and geographical spaces (indoor and/or outdoor) which, certainly for leisure purposes, they come to regard as 'theirs', where they can 'freely associate' and where they feel most comfortable. Often these will be public spaces which for periods of a day or week they use and even take over – a key stimulus for detached youth work.

However, in part again because young people are choosing to participate, they will need to experience even the more institutional contexts and environments in which youth work operates as, to a significant degree, *their* territory, emotional space in which they feel comfortable. Adult- as well as young people-defined rules and boundaries will necessarily operate within these spaces. Nonetheless, sufficient freedom and informal and sociable control of their use will need to be permitted to enable their users to experience high levels of ownership of them: as welcoming, flexible, responsive to their starting points – again, as substantially 'theirs'. And, once again, to be practised, youth work will be working with and out from those starting points.

Ideally, of course, these environments will be of high physical quality offering good, even state-of-the-art, facilities. Even when they are very basic, however, young people may still be willing to engage because workers, working with the young people themselves, bring to bear skills for developing an environment which is young people-oriented and young people-centred. And key to defining and creating this ethos is the making of another key connection – with the interests, and especially but not only with the leisure interests, of the young people actually involved, with the aim of providing opportunities for them both to enjoy these and to develop them further. Hence the creation of well used youth clubs in even the drabest of church halls and of productive detached work emerging from contacts made on the bleakest street corners or in a 'youth shelter' stuck out in the middle of a dark field.

► *Is a key focus of the practice on **the young person as an individual?***

A focus on individuals has been a central feature of liberal education in this and other countries for many decades. An essential complement to these countries' democratic values, it underpins commitments to, for example, the right to vote, the rule of and equality before the law and a range of personal freedoms. It particularly asserts that respect for persons which, as we have seen, all young people constantly demand (but do not always feel they get). It also embodies a societal commitment to help realise that potential within each of us to become more than we presently are, and even perhaps, if we can break the constraining bonds of material or social circumstances, more than we have ever envisaged for ourselves. Its explicit expression is therefore a vital guiding principle for youth work as for other educational practices.

This individualistic ethic has not just become deeply embedded in our society. It has become dominant to the point where, in youth work as in other practices, it is usually treated as self-evidently the primary (even perhaps the only appropriate) guiding and shaping principle. Yet, contradictorily, it can also significantly constrain personal growth and self-expression. By requiring, implicitly or explicitly, that individuals compete with each other for key rewards, it also means that some (indeed, often many) individuals end up as one of the losers needed to ensure that some winners do indeed emerge.

► *Is the practice respectful of and actively responsive to **young people's peer networks**?*

Youth work seeks at least to balance and at times to challenge this preoccupation with individual development and achievement through a commitment to working with and through the 'collectivities' to which young people are attached. At the very least, these include their peer networks and (considered later) those rooted in community and culture.

Because most young people give such high priority to their relationships with their peers, a practice committed to 'starting where young people are' has to work with and through their friendship groups and wider peer networks. Most obviously these are arenas in which young people share and develop leisure interests and activities – formal and informal, casual and organised, some less 'social' or indeed legal than others. As well as the considerable personal growth these can stimulate, they provide vital opportunities for young people to live and gain experience which they value in its own right, *here and now*. This is a focus on the adolescent present, which adults, largely preoccupied with adolescence-as-transition, constantly underplay and even at times deride or dismiss. For youth work, however, attending to the meaning and value of current experience for young people themselves, is a very high priority.

Involvement in peer group relationships and networks has other powerful meanings, especially for young people. Many of these *do* contribute to adolescent transition. Their often intensive interactions with friends are to a significant degree constructed precisely to create a separation of time, space and activity from parents and other power-holding adults, social and emotional 'territory' exclusive to their age group. This then provides leeway for them to start to define a distinctive and more autonomous adult identity: who they are as individuals, what is special about them and their potential, how they wish to express this difference. More positively, it also offers support as well as, often, painful challenge from others who are in the same boat, both vital for navigating this tricky process of self-definition.

Nor need the gains be merely individual, personal. Working with and through the collectivity, making use of the extra human resources and capacity generated by strength in numbers, can also produce *collective outcomes*. Youth work's focus on the teenage peer group is intended to help young people seek and develop such outcomes, to make gains which are achievable because the whole is at times greater than its parts. It also has the potential to help redress the increasingly organised and articulate influence on policy-makers of 'grey power' groups, some of which seem actively hostile to 'youth'.

In order to establish productive connections with young people and to have impacts which *they* value, acceptance of the reality and indeed centrality *for them* of peer interactions, experiences and networks is located at the very heart of youth work practice. Though not exclusive to youth work, this remains still an exceptional position. As we have seen, our most powerful educational and welfare ideologies continue to be overwhelmingly focused on individual potentiality or individual pathology. When young people's groups do appear on the radar of the institutions applying these ideologies, most still, implicitly if not explicitly, see and treat them as unhealthy, risky, threatening, as gangs to be broken up. Youth work on the other hand starts from the premise that because such peer networks are so binding on the individual young people who belong to them, they represent a crucial point of access to and

departure for work with young people. Precisely because this proposition is so exceptional in educational and welfare practice, it embodies one of youth work's key defining features.

Achieving access to these networks on terms which are substantially acceptable to young people is therefore a crucial element of that negotiation process between youth worker and young person outlined earlier. It is in this context that seeing the youth worker-young person engagement as a negotiation is especially important. For, though a – perhaps *the* – vital point of contact with young people, peer networks are indeed *not* all benign, ready-made sites for the realisation of either the young person's unique talents or the wider social good. Like all collectivities they can also be restrictive, oppressive and even damaging. Nor is it only older people who are affected. Young people too, indeed, probably mainly, are on the receiving end of such pressures as is demonstrated by their daily experience of bullying and sexual and racial harassment. Here, therefore, the agreements being sought through the youth work negotiation will not only need to be acceptable and credible to these young people via respectful but open and honest exchange, they will need also to be ones which the youth worker too, can stand over professionally.

For the most part however, a much more creative view of the potential of young people's peer networks shapes youth work practice, a perspective which has been at its heart from its inception. It is an essential element of what is described later as seeking to prompt young people to go beyond where they are starting in the youth work encounter. Moreover, it assumes that a key aim and a key dimension of the skill required is the proactive development of such group experiences. Using a range of media which non-youth workers have at times mistaken as mere 'treats' – sport, the arts, outdoor activities, residential experience and so on – youth work seeks to harness the positive potential of peer interaction by deliberately creating new and stretching group experiences into which it seeks to draw young people.

This emphasis on the collective does not of course rule out a deepening of individual relationships. In addition to being valued in their own right, these can also lead to forms of productive one-to-one work within the youth work practice itself as well as to increased trust by the young person needing to be referred to more specialist services. Nonetheless, youth work's core perspectives and its core activities remain negotiated interventions into the self-formed groupings which in our society are so central to so many young people's current experience and to their longer-term development.

► *Is the practice respectful of and actively responsive to **young people's wider community and cultural identities** and, where young people choose, is it seeking to help them strengthen these?*

Youth work which 'starts where young people are starting' also requires a commitment to respect and be responsive to other collectivities, particularly those of 'community' and 'culture'. In this context, the former may be defined geographically or by a group's commonality of interests and identity; the latter by individuals' consciousness of the values, norms and practices which they share with others (immediate family, wider kin, friends, neighbours); and which often in profound ways, shape their long-term as well as their everyday exchanges with each other.

For youth work, there are both negative and positive perspectives at work here. The negative ones seek to distance the practice both from notions of personal growth as a matter *only* of individual choice and effort, and from explanations of individual failure as the product *only* of individual (or indeed family) weakness, inadequacy and breakdown. These also recognise that our society is still experienced by many, and not least for young people, as increasingly isolating and personally dislocating. Enhanced involvement and identity with others can then contribute to a more satisfying sense of self. They recognise, too, that our society still readily excludes and even demonises those who choose, again like many young people, to retain and publicly display difference, and who have little power to answer back. In these conditions the collectivities of community and culture offer a degree of security and identity to vulnerable individuals as well as a possible additional strength in numbers.

These collectivities, however, also have a much more positive and developmental potential which fits closely with youth work's educational and developmental aspirations. Strong community and cultural identities can be decisive in helping individuals to establish a clear and confident self-identity. They can also help enrich young people's lives in much broader and social ways. This can be true both for those who define themselves as within these collectivities and for those who, though outside their boundaries, welcome the rewards which come from actively embracing rather than merely (at best) tolerating social diversity. And they can be the basis for a raised consciousness of shared issues and concerns from which political engagement in its widest sense may flow.

Here too contradictions and dilemmas are embedded in such a practice. Like peer networks, these collectivities, as well as being supportive and liberating, can be constraining and even oppressive. Some may support cultures which marginalise or harass or actively reject individuals or whole groups, for example women and young gays. Even where such prejudicial attitudes are not culturally endorsed, an individual's efforts to balance self-expression and personal growth with respect for and adherence to community or cultural expectations can be painful and even, at the extreme, destructive. This ambivalence can be experienced particularly sharply where those individuals, though wanting to sustain their identity, nonetheless come to resent some of the demands and constraints it places on them. In such situations, youth work will be striving to identify positive and supportive responses, perhaps by offering the young people additional role models or alternative affirming experiences.

Because youth work has to work within these tensions, the application of its commitment to working with and through the community and cultural identities central to young people's lives is therefore never straightforward or one-dimensional. This however merely highlights again the centrality to the practice of carefully judged and focused – that is, again, negotiated – entry into these collectivities. Here, too, a key aim will be to achieve a mutually acceptable matching of, on the one hand, the starting points defined by young people themselves and, on the other, youth work's own values, purposes and insights.

In this delineation of the 'wider networks' on which young people draw, one 'absence' is particularly striking: that of 'the family'. This is not because most young people do not value their familial relationships, often broadly defined. Nor is it to suggest that youth workers seek to work deliberately against these, or, whether or not they are supportive, that they underestimate their significance for young people. It is however to recognise that, for youth

work, they do not have the same profile or priority as either community or culture. This is because, in starting where young people are starting and by working on their territory, youth work engages with young people at just those moments and in just those contexts where, often explicitly, they are seeking some separation from familial, and particularly parental, oversight and control.

Clearly circumstances will occur where involvement with family may be necessary and even urgent, occasionally almost in spite of what an individual young person might choose. Dilemmas, sometimes acute, are also likely where the lines between 'family' and 'culture' are especially blurred, for example by class or ethnicity. However, where the choice presents itself: 'Whose side do I need to be on – the young person's or the family's?', the 'default' response, set once again by the young person *choosing* to engage with youth work, remains 'the young person's'.

- *Is the practice seeking to **go beyond where young people start**, in particular by encouraging them to be outward looking, critical and creative in their responses to their experience and the world around them?*

Because of its emphasis on process, particularly in its various expressions on starting where young people are starting, youth work can too easily be misunderstood as giving too little priority to product, to outcomes. This risk is further heightened by locating so much youth work within young people's leisure time and contexts and starting much of it from what, to a casual observer, can look like 'low culture' or 'pop culture' recreational activities. Youth workers themselves at times reinforce such perceptions by taking a line of least resistance, avoiding the often tough process of negotiation with the young people they meet and settling for unchallenging 'pass-times'. In the process they may do little more than confirm the young in the already circumscribing traps of limited opportunity and experience.

It is here that youth work as a value-based practice needs to be asserted. Crucially underpinning these values is a commitment to working from a potentiality rather than a deficiency model of the young. This points particularly to seeking, within their social context, to helping realise a version of each young person which is greater than the one she or he knows they are bringing with them; greater than the one they are currently displaying to others; and maybe even greater than the one they may yet have imagined for themselves.

Moreover, such stirrings in young people's self-images will be stimulated by inputs deliberately intended to foster a new or renewed confidence – including, however modestly, to take the world on a bit. An so, rather than just accepting it for what it is and as it has always been delivered to them or just responding in terms conventionally laid down by powerful others (especially elders), good youth work will seek to provide a security and a facility which affirm more critical and creative responses. (For practical examples of this principle at work see Brent, 2004; Davies and Docking, 2004, Sections 2 and 3).

Few of us, whatever our class background, gender or other prescribed social role or situation, come close to achieving such raised self-expectations and the personal development these can generate without the prompting and prodding of others, including often, of course, our peers. The links made therefore with young people's starting points, with the expectation

of relaxing and having fun; with their needs, interests and aspirations as young people and as individuals; with their identification with peer, community and cultural networks – are, as we have seen, vital. But they are just that: starting points. Or, more actively: they are launch pads from which lift-off can begin towards a newer and more developmentally stretching and liberating orbit of personal and indeed collective achievement and satisfaction. Though objectively this may look quite modest, subjectively the distance thus travelled, the heights reached, can feel and be quite giddy.

Here again, the notion of process is central. Such changes in self-image, such expressions of this new self in new actions are rarely instant events, especially if they are to be sustained. Nor are they often brought about in isolation, insulated from the stimulus and support of others, especially those who in some key ways are seen and experienced as 'like me'. They are most often and most effectively the product of carefully nurtured – including, again self-nurtured – engagement with others around shared interests and concerns: a description which, when applied to practice with young people, can be seen as one key feature of youth work.

► *Is the practice concerned with **how young people feel** and as well as with what they know and can do?*

Again because of the focus on process, indeed, as another dimension of that perceived lack of attention to product, youth work's concern with helping young people to *know* more and be able to *do* more can be under-estimated. Yet such focuses have to be at the heart of the practice because, if they were not, it is doubtful if that negotiation with young people for sustained involvement could be successful. For young people too, want to see something for their efforts which they can recognise, value, find useful. In the process, they will expect to use and also build on and extend the knowledge, understandings and skills needed for ensuring that such products are realised. Though they may be different in kind, 'outcomes' for them are thus usually at least as important as they are for providers and funders.

However, again as the emphasis on process highlights, for most young people these, though important, are in themselves rarely sufficient. As well, young people are looking for responses and experiences which will help them accomplish some of the key developmental tasks of their particular stage of life: to be respected as individuals; to speak for themselves and be listened to; to exercise some power, especially in their encounters with adults; to have their peer relationships recognised and, again, respected; to have their community and cultural identities affirmed. Practice which is obsessively instrumental, preoccupied only with the technicalities of what is to be done or with which attitudes and behaviours are to be changed, is always liable to close down the space or block the responsiveness needed for these tasks to be adequately addressed. And this in turn is liable to alienate young people, turn them into 'excludes', not just from key institutions and programmes but from an identification with core societal values and norms.

Essential to reversing such negative processes is another of youth work markers: a sensitivity to and valuing of what and how young people feel about themselves, about others, about their wider world. This again will need to include specific attention to their here-and-now as well as to the futures (as workers or parents in the making) which are required of them or which (ostensibly) are being promised to them by currently dominant policy imperatives.

For, just as, for youth work, young people are citizens now they are also *people* now, with feelings needing to be recognised, emotional needs to be satisfied and actual as well as potential 'emotional intelligence' to be developed. The evidence is now accumulating on how important these affective dimensions of living are, for young people no less than for adults, in achieving personal happiness and individual fulfilment. In a society increasingly focused on qualifications and vocational success, they merit, in their own right, the kinds of committed and sustained inputs which the youth work process can (with others) provide.

## Configuring youth work

Of course, many other practices-with-people also lay claim to some – many – of the features of youth work set out above. Some, for example in further and higher education, would say they too rely on participants' voluntary engagement. Most would say that they take their starting points as the starting point for their intervention. Most would see their mission as helping young people develop well beyond these starting points. Most would assert their commitment to the client or student or indeed patient as an individual, to showing respect for their community or cultural identities and to connecting with their feelings.

Not only would no other practice lay claim to all these principles, however on some of them where there is common ground, youth workers would insist that they wish to go further – for example, from respecting to actively embracing young people's collective identities and seeking to help them to assert these identities more confidently. Whatever the precise balances in these areas, however, there are two main reasons for spelling out youth work's core characteristics in this way:

1. It is their overall *configuration* as outlined above which defines youth work, with the whole thus becoming something different from -greater than – the sum of the individual parts.
2. Within this configuration, some of the elements are given such prominence – even pre-eminence – that together they generate a definition of a *distinctive practice*. These elements are the explicit commitments to:
  - young people's voluntary participation
  - seeking to tip balances of power in their favour
  - responding to their expectation that youth work will offer them relaxation and fun
  - responding to their expectation that youth work will penetrate unstimulating environments and break cycles of boredom by offering new experiences and challenging activities
  - seeing and responding to them simply as young people, as untouched as possible by pre-set labels
  - working on and from their 'territory', at times defined literally but also as appropriate to include their interests, their current activities and styles and their emotional concerns
  - respecting and working through their peer networks

It is when these elements of the practice are configured into a whole that a distinctive practice emerges: youth work.

## The youth work process

The features of youth work outlined so far represent signposts for implementing the practice – checkpoints along the way for ascertaining whether (or not) the work is on course. What they do not do is clarify what that ‘way’ is, the direction that ‘course’ needs to take, that is, what movement(s) need to occur to make the practice as responsive as possible to the young people who actually become engaged with it. For much of the time youth workers plot their route through these ‘intuitively’, ‘sub-consciously’, as part of the second nature of what they do. However, this movement is not random. It is guided and shaped by usually unarticulated questions, in effect posed to themselves at critical moments. These underpin both planning and preparation and, in the usually highly interactive face-to-face situations in which they operate, their ‘on the wing’ reactions (Department of Education and Science, 1987).

The final section of this paper seeks to make a start on capturing some of the potentially significant of these questions, posed starkly, in admittedly under-developed ways. This approach has been adopted mainly because I recognise that my thinking and analysis on these is still very under-developed, at the point I had perhaps reached in unpacking the questions addressed in the previous sections some ten or fifteen years ago. What follows therefore is even more ‘work in progress’ than what has gone before. However, rather than conceding to the temptation to omit it altogether I have included it as something which most urgently needs wider critical debate and input. This especially needs to come I believe, from practitioners, since credible ‘answers’ are only likely to emerge from systematic, critical and indeed collective as well as individual reflection on practice.

For me however, at this moment, the beginnings of a framework for encapsulating what youth workers mean when they talk about ‘the youth work process’ might perhaps be built around the following types of question:

- ▶ *Who are **these** young people?*
  - Why are *they* here?
  - Why are they *here*?
  - What individual abilities, interests and aspirations are they bringing with them?
  - What are their levels of confidence and self-esteem:
    - as young people;
    - in their relationships with their closest friend or friends;
    - within their wider informal peer group structures ;
    - with which adults;
    - into possible relationships with us, the youth workers actually in touch with them?
  - What are, for them, important peer relationship/group contexts?
    - What are the power relations, rules and sanctions within these?
    - What effects are these having on individual young people?
    - What effects are they likely to have for any youth work intervention?
  - What for them are explicit or possible wider identities which need to be respected and embraced?
  - What do these ‘readings’ suggest might be the most promising connecting points for a possible youth work intervention?

- ▶ *Is some youth work intervention in these young people's lives **justified**?*
  - What is the justification?
  - On what evidence?
  - How motivated are these young people likely to be to receive/respond to these?
  
- ▶ *How do we **personalise this first contact**?*
  - How do we tailor a first contact to respect these young people's right to choose whether or not to become engaged beyond this initial contact?
  - How do we tailor it to who they are and where they have reached in their (personal and group) development – particularly as young people?
  - How do we tailor it to their wider collective identities?
  - Where could this contact best happen?
  - Who should try to make it?
  - Does the identity of the worker(s) matter – whether, for example, they are local or 'an incomer', male or female; black or white; gay or straight, (dis)abled?
  
- ▶ *Within what **'activity' or on what other 'territory'** could the contact be best initiated?*
  - What are the (stated or implied) individual and/or collective interests, concerns, aspirations – preoccupations – of these young people?
  - What are the points of youth work access to and entry onto this territory?
  - Where will an appropriate youth work intervention fit on an informal-formal continuum of activity and structure?
  
- ▶ *What **connections** might be made between these young people's starting points and ways of moving on beyond them – for **prompting additional developmental opportunities** for these young people?*
  - Again:
    - What individual abilities, interests and aspirations have these young people brought with them?
    - What are their levels of confidence and self-esteem?
  - What connections can be made between these starting points and potential developmental opportunities?
  - How motivated are these young people for actually looking for, making and acting on such connections?
  - What youth work inputs might be needed to create/increase this motivation?
  - What youth work inputs might be needed to build these connections?
  
- ▶ *Within all this, how best to tread the delicate line between supporting and increasing, and certainly not undermining, **these young people's independence and their control over their own lives**?*
  - How do these young people define:
    - their starting points, including their starting motivation;
    - their interests, abilities and aspirations;
    - their levels of confidence and self-esteem;
    - their significant peer relationships and community and cultural identities?
  - How far do the potential youth work definitions of each of these co-incide with those of young people?

- Where are there significant discrepancies between the two?
- What are the justifications for trying to go beyond – maybe even override – these young people’s perceptions and definitions?
- What might be the cost-benefit balance for these young people of seeking to do this?

## An unfinished practice

As already indicated, the question form here has been adopted in part to emphasise the internal self-reflection and, with colleagues, the explicit debates essential to understanding and defining any youth work process. This form, however, is meant to do more than just *describe*. The questions are also an attempt to illuminate – to give a little more life to – some of the realities of the process stemming from some of the core and distinctive features outlined earlier. Particularly significant here are youth work’s negotiable power relations with young people and its location (at least initially) both on recreational and emotional as well as physical ‘territory’ chosen by them and within their fluid and largely unpredictable peer interactions. For, this mode of operation will constantly be throwing up further questions which – again often ‘on the wing’, in the very middle of the action – will require responses if not actual ‘answers’. Again over-simply, these may need to include:

- *Do I correct that factual error – or that one? Or just ignore both?*
- *Do I follow up that implied personal disclosure? Now? Not at all because the implication is so weak?*
- *Do I react to that racist remark now? Or later? By a confrontational challenge, by a more indirectly questioning approach – by prompting a discussion; or by arranging some direct contact with the despised ‘other’?*

If some at least of these questions, or questions like them, help explain why ‘process’ is at the heart of youth work practice, then they reveal youth work as always an ‘unfinished’ practice. It is unfinished in the sense that, whatever clear and ‘hard’ outcomes it may in due course generate, to be effective it, *par excellence*, requires of its practitioners – to say nothing of the young people engaged with it! – a constant exercise of choice, recurrent risk-taking, a continuing negotiation of uncertainty. As a ‘professional’ practice, it is guided by vision combined with tactical ‘nous’ and requiring balance, timing and nerve. The actual course of its practice, however, is ultimately decided by human interactions which are always fluid, continuously shifting and which therefore can offer no guarantee of reaching certain and final endpoints.

All of which returns us with a bump to our starting point – to the fact that, by its very nature, youth work will (at best) be able only accidentally to sight its targets with the sharpness or mould its outcomes with the neatness which most current policy-making is demanding. This of course is not just youth work’s dilemma: which teacher or social worker or Connexions PA would not say something similar? However, because it is so process-driven, the dilemma for youth work is especially sharp since over-enthusiastic and under-analysed colonisation by non-youth work agencies could so easily extract from the practice what ultimately makes it youth work.

## From words to action

This paper has been written on the assumption that this need not happen – that in human affairs what is subsequently explained as inevitable is too often the result of a fatalism bred of pessimism which results in a failure of capable and responsible people to act. In this context, ‘acting’ will hopefully mean, at the very least, a spirited but coherent articulation by those of us who identify ourselves as youth workers of what is distinctive about youth work and how it contributes to young people’s growth and well being.

## Acknowledgments

My thanks to Rob Hunter, Tony Jeffs, Mary Marken, Jon Ord, Jean Spence, Ian Trafford and Tom Wylie for taking time to offer critical comment on the first draft of this paper.

## References

- Barrett, S. (2004), ‘Youth Services are part of the package’, *Young People Now*, 1–7 December.
- Barrett, S. (2005), ‘Draft Green Paper begs many questions’, *Young People Now*, 16–22 March.
- Brent, J. (2004), ‘Communicating what Youth Work Achieves: the smile and the arch’, *Youth and Policy*, no 84.
- Cantle Report (2002), *Community Cohesion in Britain*, Home Office.
- Crimmens, D., Factor, F. Jeffs, T., Pitts, J., Pugh, C., Spence, J. and Turner, P. (2004), *Reaching socially excluded young people: A national study of street-based youth work*, Leicester: National Youth Agency/Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Davies, B. (1979), *In Whose Interests?: From Social Education to Social Life Skills*, Leicester: National Youth Bureau.
- Davies, B. (1981), ‘The survival of social education through the right to know’, *Youth in Society*, January.
- Davies, B. (1999), ‘Do Young People Still Need Youth Work?’, in H. Murphy and M. Shaw (eds) *Conceptualising Youth Work: Back to the Future*, Concept/Scottish Youth Lobby, Edinburgh.
- Davies, B. and Docking, J. (2004), *Transforming Lives: Re-engaging young people through community-based projects* – NSF Good Practice, DfES.
- Department for Education and Skills (2002), *Transforming Youth Work: Resourcing Excellent Youth Services*, DfES.
- Department of Education and Science (1987), *Education Observed 6: Effective youth work – a report by HM Inspectors*, DES
- France, A. and Wiles, P. (1996), *The Youth Action Scheme: A Report of the National Evaluation*, DfEE.
- Hodge, M. (2005), ‘The Youth of Today’, Speech to the Institute of Public Policy Research, 19 January

- Lloyd, T. (2005), 'A radical programme of reform', *Young People Now*, 16–22 March.
- Merton, B. (with Payne, M. and Smith, D.) (2004), *An Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Work in England*, DfES Research Report, 606, DfES.
- Rogers, E. (2005), 'A coherent training framework', *Young People Now*, 13–19 April.
- Social Exclusion Unit (2005), *Transitions: a Social Exclusion Unit Report on Young Adults*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- Spence, J. (2004), 'Targeting, Accountability and Youth Work Practice', *Practice*, Vol 16, No 4.
- Teenage Pregnancy Unit (2001), *Guidance for youth workers on providing information and referring young people to contraceptive and sexual health services*, Department of Health.
- Ward, J. and Rhodes, T. (undated), *Drugs Prevention through Youth Work*, Unpublished paper.



**The National Youth Agency**

Eastgate House, 19–23 Humberstone Road,  
Leicester LE5 3GJ. Tel: 0116 242 7350. Fax: 0116 242 7444.

E-mail: [nya@nya.org.uk](mailto:nya@nya.org.uk)

Website: [www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk)