

ONLY YOUNG ONCE

The Labour Party's Vision for
Rebuilding Youth Services



Forward



The experiences of our youth can shape our entire future lives. Our young people should be supported in adolescence, a time that should be as full of wonder and as free from trouble as possible. With each young person we have just one chance to get it all right.

The cuts to public services over the last decade have hit young people particularly hard. Life for young people in Britain today is far harder than it needs to be, and worse in many ways than it was for previous generations. Young people live with overwhelming exam pressures, a rising number of school exclusions, escalating student debt, chronic levels of mental ill-health, an epidemic of loneliness and social isolation, growing levels of knife and other violent crimes and the emergence of county lines gangs, as well as various forms of body dysmorphia and self-harm.

Over the last decade, the social infrastructure for young people has been ripped out of their communities – from Sure Start centres to youth clubs closed in their hundreds. The Conservatives have created a life lottery for young people, with huge differences between what is provided in different areas of the country, and not enough on offer to young people in any area of the country.

Against a backdrop of rising child poverty, a whole generation of young people have been raised without sufficient care. Many of them are in crisis as a result of the negligence. It is a crisis that need not be continued.

Young people deserve better. Our communities deserve better. Our country deserves better.

It is urgent that we rebuild our youth services. We need local youth services across the whole country. We need services that can meet the complex challenges faced by young people today. We need services that will nurture youth and empower young people to improve their own lives. That is why Cat Smith MP, the Shadow Minister for Youth Affairs, has led efforts in the Labour Party to develop new policies for youth services. Policies that will transform the lives of young people and change our country for the good.

In this plan we set out both our vision, and our immediate plans, the first steps and the direction the next Labour government will take to create good youth services.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jeremy Corbyn'.

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP



Preface



Only Young Once sets out Labour's vision for rebuilding youth services nationwide.

In June 2018 the Labour Party launched a consultation on our vision for youth services.

Only Young Once is a product of that consultation. It draws on evidence from written submissions, survey responses from young people and numerous study visits, extensive meetings with core stakeholders and expert advice, as well as policy development discussions within the Labour Party's structures and with our affiliated organisations.

I am enormously grateful and would like to thank all those who voluntarily provided their time, knowledge, skills and experiences to the process, including my own team of support staff. This document is intended to capture

the complementary ideas and best proposals which have emerged from our rigorous, collaborative work together. Thank you.

Only Young Once draws inspiration from the progressive work pursued by the Welsh Labour government for youth services in Wales but it will apply only in England. Youth services are devolved matters in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The devolved national administrations will develop their own, nationally tailored policies and services for youth in each country, a task which will be made more possible by the existing consequential funding arrangements.

In government, for England, Labour will continue our close working arrangements with the voluntary sector and all the other stakeholders with an interest in youth services, as we take these proposals forward and turn them into action.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Cat Smith'.

Cat Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Youth Affairs

Contents

1. Introduction	9
2. Labour's vision for youth services	10
3. Non-formal education for all young people	14
4. Restoring strategic leadership	16
5. Building partnerships	18
6. Rebuilding the workforce	22
7. National leadership	28
8. Inspections and evaluation	30
9. Sustainable funding	32
10. Conclusion	33
Appendix	34

1. Introduction

Youth services play a vital role in our communities. They provide a safe place for young people to be creative and develop new friendships, with a trusted professional. However, after nine years of austerity, many parts of our country now have no recognisable youth services at all. Public spending on youth services in England has fallen by £1 billion since 2010, a reduction of 73%. Over 750 youth centres have closed their doors since 2012 and 14,500 youth and community worker jobs have been lost since 2008.

The loss of youth work has had a devastating impact on young lives across the country. Young people have lost role models – someone who can build their aspirations, empower them to recognise their strengths, and spot the emergence of anti-social behaviour and divisive ideologies before they become social problems. Young people have lost safe spaces – somewhere to be creative, develop social groups and friendships, and have a sense of belonging and ownership over their local area. Young people have lost opportunities – to learn new skills, take part in social action projects, and re-engage in education. As a result, there are many young people growing up today with nowhere to go, nothing to do, and no one to speak to outside of school and their home environment.

The last Labour government attempted to strengthen the statutory base of local authority youth services. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (s6) places a statutory duty on local authorities to secure sufficient access to “positive activities” for young people using youth work methods and approaches, as well as respecting and acting out their views in the development of services. However, this Act does not define what access to provision should look like and is open to interpretation. This legislation also includes a get-out clause: that the youth work activities were to be provided only “so far as reasonable practicable”.

Because of these limitations, local authorities could ignore their statutory responsibilities when the Tories came to power in 2010 and inflicted significant cuts to their budgets. This has led to huge variations in the level of services young people access. Young people in one postcode receive a totally different level of service to those in neighbouring areas, with no accountability or strategy to try and ensure this is not the case. We believe this statutory obligation must be strengthened.

The Labour Party is committed to working with young people to build a nation where they are safe and secure in the modern world, treated fairly, supported in the present, and ambitious for their future. We will achieve this vision by introducing legislation to guarantee quality youth services for all of our young people and giving our councils the funding they need to invest in our public services.

2. Labour's vision for youth services

Young people today

The adolescent developmental phase between childhood and adulthood brings significant physical and emotional changes and challenges for young people. Moving from primary to secondary school often results in the breaking up of long-standing friendship groups and support networks. Many young people have difficulties managing peer pressure around sex, drinking alcohol and taking drugs.

Today's youth also face new and unique challenges. Rising levels of knife crime and county lines, chronic levels of mental ill-health and loneliness, surging housing prices, stagnating wages, escalating student debt – the idea of generational progress has ground to a halt.

Despite the difficulties young people face, there is a tendency to look at young people in negative terms. The media continues to portray young people in an overwhelmingly negative light, focusing on risky behaviour such as drinking, smoking and illicit drug use, despite positive indications that these are all declining amongst young people. Although the vast majority of young people do not end up in trouble with the law, most of the stories we read about young people focus on crime.

It is right to identify growing trends of negative outcomes, but to solely focus on that undermines the agency young people have as a group to be empowered and improve their own lives. Within this context, youth provision is often viewed as a method of 'fixing a problem'. Youth services are often framed as a way to divert young people away from bad or risky behaviour, instead of assisting young people to realise their full potential and live successfully in their communities.

Labour's visions

The Labour Party is committed to working with young people to build a nation where they are safe and secure in the modern world, treated fairly, supported in the present, and ambitious for their future:

- **Skilled and equipped to learn and earn**
- **Positive health and wellbeing**
- **Active members of their communities**
- **Happy and confident in their future**

We will achieve this vision by providing long-term, stable funding for youth services to ensure all young people have access to high quality youth work provision that matches their needs. We will introduce new legislation that clearly defines a base-level of sufficiency, as well as mechanisms for holding local council and local partnership arrangements to account for the provision in each area.

The main purpose of youth services will be to provide non-formal education through personal, social and political development. All key elements of youth provision will be specified in a National Charter for Youth Work that is underpinned in law (see appendix for charter and key terminology and definitions).

This is based on the following principles:

Young person-centred – Open and inclusive youth work welcoming all young people; provision will be based on relationships of trust built up between young people and trained youth workers; and voluntary participation will apply across all levels

Needs led – The needs of young people will be understood at a local level and used to inform delivery to meet these needs. Youth work will focus on supporting young people to be the best individuals or community members they can be, and practitioners will achieve this through addressing the complex needs of young people

Collaborative – This vision will be implemented through collaborative partnerships at a local, regional, national and international level; where young people are not 'problems' but are supported to overcome barriers and create their own opportunities

Democratic – The content, direction and success criteria of provision will be negotiated between young people and those working with them; with high levels of ownership by young people over what goes on

Progressive – This will be supplemented by specialist targeted youth work and interact with other services for young people where additional needs or opportunities are identified, from formal education and social services, to criminal justice, health care, housing and benefits

The functions of a statutory youth service will be to work with young people to:

- Provide a safe place to be creative, develop social groups and friendships, with a trusted adult to enable and encourage young people to recognise their strengths and assets
- Support National Citizen Service (NCS) accredited youth social action and other forms of leadership, and encourage young people to set up and run their own activities and organisations, with appropriate guidance
- Promote active citizenship and ensure that their voices are heard, treated fairly, and involved in the community with influence in local decision-making to support their participation in democracy
- Build the aspirations of young people and promote healthy, active lifestyles including participation in education, arts, culture, physical activity and sport, and international visits

In carrying out its functions the youth service will:

- Promote community cohesion and inclusion, and develop equality opportunities
- Address social inequalities and support vulnerable young people, including discrimination and racial disparities and access to opportunities for young people from deprived backgrounds
- Challenge the emergence of anti-social behaviour and divisive ideologies before they became social problems
- Support groups with specific identities, such as young LGBT+ people, young people with special needs, young women, or specific religious communities

- Work in partnership with other public, private and voluntary services for the interests of young people
- Signpost and connect to other organisations and services providing support to young people, including education and employment opportunities, and information, advice and counselling provisions
- Ensure the active voluntary participation of young people in the specification, governance, delivery and scrutiny of services

A young person-centred service

The deconstruction of youth services has eroded the long historic connection between youth work and community based democratic engagement. Youth workers excel at supporting and incorporating young people's voices into youth work services. Yet by cutting youth services, this Government has denied young people the space and structures to participate in decision-making at a local level.

Youth work as a practice is inherently democratic and so the interaction must be negotiated with young people from the outset. Young people will be at the centre of determining a new statutory youth service and this will apply across all levels, including in providing their voice at individual service levels, regional levels through local authorities, and also at a national level. At a local authority level, different regions will have differing needs for their young people, and therefore young people should be determining what targeted services are offered.

Labour recognises that the highest form of youth participation is co-management, co-decision and co-delivery with other professionals and elected representatives. Young people will be supported and encouraged to have an equal say in the design and management of youth services in their area. However, it is also understood that the voices of vulnerable young people can be less heard and Local Youth Partnerships (LYPs) (see section 4) should balance all inputs and needs of young people and the wider community.

To achieve a young person-centred service a Labour government will:

- **Ensure young people are fully represented on the national body for youth work and any local planning body for the youth service and are actively involved in the specification, commissioning, governance, delivery and scrutiny of services**
- **Give young people and their organisations a statutory right to be consulted on the development of local youth service plans and any changes to them, and similarly in the formation of any national body and any changes to funding**
- **Train and assist a cohort of Young Inspectors to empower young people to measure the quality and impact of the youth offer**
- **Strengthen the reach of UK Youth Parliament, local youth councils and regional forums through Regional Youth Work Units**

A flexible approach

Traditionally youth work professionals in this country have viewed the ages of 11-19 (up to 25 for young people with SEND) as being appropriate for youth services, with a common understanding that most will access provision between the ages of 13-19. Transitions from primary to secondary school age, and from secondary to further or higher education and employment are significant too. The new environments young people inhabit today require interventions at an earlier age. For example, in some cases children as young as eight have been involved in drug 'county lines', in carrying or concealing weapons, and in a variety of behaviours that are severely disturbing and new.

Under Labour, youth services will be flexible to the needs of young people. Calculations for core funded age range for delivering statutory youth services will be 11-19. However LYPs will be encouraged to decide if early intervention is needed, recognising that individual development does not occur at a standard pace and there should be flexibility on either side of this age bracket to support some young people with particular needs, such as young people leaving the care system or with disabilities. Local authorities and their partners are best placed to identify the most effective approach for their young people and will be able to determine this.

Funding under Labour will be based not on the young people reached but the need identified in plans and therefore allows for spend to be flexible according to the local need.

3. Non-formal education for all young people

Lessons from the past

Youth work as a professional practice, pioneered first in the UK, focuses on young people's defined needs through non-formal education. Sadly it has been diminished and undermined by previous governments, who often concentrated more on meeting employment targets. The fact that youth work is regarded as a "positive activity" in legislation and the statutory guidance demonstrates a failure to recognise youth work as a distinct educational process. Youth work supplements formal education by harnessing young people's skills and encouraging self-esteem amongst those who are often less able to flourish in strictly academic environments.

There has also been a particular emphasis on working with young people at risk (those assessed as not in education, employment or training [NEET] or who are at risk of, or already fall into the following categories: teenage pregnancy, drugs, alcohol or substance abuse or offending). This led to a predominantly deficit model of young people, with the highest priority identified as "targeting" those seen as "vulnerable", "disadvantaged" and "at risk".

Diverse, open access youth work provision

Under a future Labour government, youth work will be accessible to all young people. We want to create a system of diverse, open youth work, giving young people a variety of options, depending on local needs. This will take place in a range of contexts and settings in which young people choose to be, such as youth centres and clubs, residential or community centres, social action projects, or street youth work.

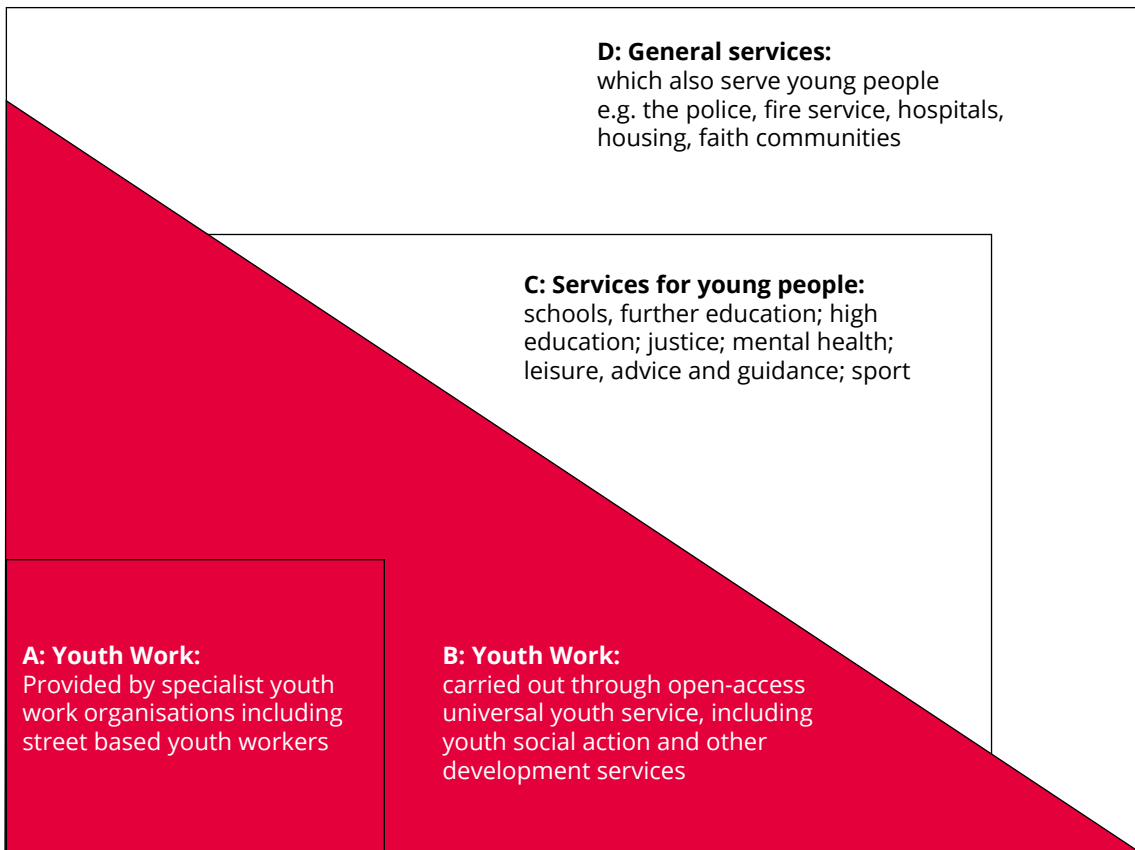
There are also many activities and opportunities that young people benefit from which are not traditionally considered part of the statutory youth sector. This includes sports clubs, art and drama groups, social enterprises, after school clubs, uniformed youth groups such as the Guides and the Scouts, and national programmes, such as NCS. These activities all contribute to the richness of a young person's social development journey and should be accessible to all.

A distinct educational process

The main purpose of youth services will be to provide non-formal education that supports the personal, social and political development of all young people, and engages them in meaningful activities and social actions. We will prioritise long-term, community-based non-formal education that young people engage in by choice over short programmes that label young people as 'risky' or 'at risk'.

Because youth work focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills for young people, responsibility for it will be transferred to the Department for Education. We will also consider whether youth services should fit within Labour's National Education Service, which will offer lifelong learning from cradle to grave.

However, youth work facilities and practices will be developed as provision in their own right rather than within the formal educational settings of school and college. Youth services will remain independent and complementary to other services such as formal education, social services and the NHS.



As adapted by the original model by Tom Wylie, 2006 (NYA)

To ensure non-formal education is accessible to all young people, a Labour government will:

- Create a **Youth Service Fund**. This will provide funding to ensure all young people have access to universal services. LYPs will be required to submit local plans to access and draw down funding from central government and guidance will be set out to assist them in the process (see appendix for government structures).
- Make the Secretary of State for Education accountable for young people, working together with local authorities and voluntary bodies to promote and secure sufficient access to youth services. The Secretary of State for Education will report annually to Parliament on decisions taken by the Cabinet.

4. Restoring strategic leadership

The declining role of local authority

Youth services in England were once a unique public service built by young people, youth workers and their unions, and local authorities. Every local authority had a team of full and part time youth workers, working with volunteers in outreach projects and networks of buildings that were dedicated to young people. Local authorities also offered free places at local schools for voluntary youth groups and gave them grants to co-ordinate their work with the statutory youth service.

But this all changed when the Tories came to power in 2010 and slashed local authority budgets. Labour councils sought to protect services in their communities, and innovated where funds were cut so that they could still deliver a youth provision. It is testament to our voluntary sector that provision has not completely collapsed under the weight of these cuts.

However, youth services in England no longer exists as a service provided in every local authority area with a specialist team of professionals and dedicated buildings and projects for young people. In many ways, it was the first public service to be dismantled.

There is a real gap felt from the withdrawal of local authorities' role in leading and facilitating the provision of good youth work and support from professional youth workers in their areas, putting higher burdens on the already oversubscribed voluntary sector. The commissioning of services has also weakened the infrastructure and potential of collaborative approaches to service planning and delivery.

Restoring strategic leadership

Labour is committed to empowering our communities to create a youth service that is delivered and directed locally, and not dictated from Whitehall. We will rebuild what is currently a very large yet fragmented youth sector and ensure that local authorities can provide the strategic leadership needed for young people in their local areas.

Care should be taken to establish the best model of delivery at a local level and local authorities should consider delivering in-house as the preferred option. This aligns with our wider framework for public sector reform. Under Labour, whenever service contracts between councils and contractors expire or are terminated, there is a presumption that they will be insourced. To rebut the presumption of in-house provision, a council must be able to satisfy itself of certain conditions.

However, we recognise that this may not be an effective solution for every local authority, where risks involved with significant contact with at-risk people, exercise of coercive powers, or infringement of people's rights are best mitigated by retaining contracting-out (especially where a local authority contract is with a community provider). It is also important to recognise the role that voluntary youth groups play in the ecology of local youth services and the trusted relationships they have with young people in the community.

Local authorities will be responsible for establishing and facilitating LYPs and setting a strategic vision for what they want to achieve for their young people. Local authorities will work alongside local partners and young people to shape provision in the local area and ensure sufficient access to high quality youth work provision. This will be overseen by the national body for youth work to ensure such partnerships and provision is in place.

The statutory responsibilities of a local authority will be to:

- Establish and facilitate the delivery of LYPs
- Work with partner organisations (including neighbouring LAs in their area) to develop a diverse, universal offer of youth work provisions for young people, including voluntary youth groups and open access youth work
- Work with partner organisations to establish a local workforce development strategy to rebuild a qualified and experienced youth work workforce ready to work collaboratively with young people and other agencies
- Work with partner organisations to establish and submit a 3/5-year plan for local delivery, against national standards, with support and challenge where required from the national body for youth work
- Work with partner organisations to draw down core funding from the Youth Service Fund and distribute between local partners
- Integrate the local youth work offer with other strategies for young people the council may have developed
- Provide 'back of house' support for smaller partner voluntary organisations, such as administrative and health and safety expertise

5. Building partnerships

Holistic support

The concerns young people face and society's commitment to nurture them are cross-cutting and require support across local services. Youth workers are well placed in the community to ensure young people get that support.

Youth work takes a holistic approach, starting where they are at in terms of developmental or physical location and the relationship between young people and youth worker is entirely voluntary. Good youth work also works in partnership with other public, private and voluntary services for the interests of young people and signposts to other organisations and services providing support to young people, including education and employment opportunities, and information, advice and counselling provisions.

Fragmented provision

In response to the deconstruction of local authority youth services, we have seen a growth in creative, good quality, responsive approaches through voluntary and not for profit organisations. There are now new and innovative models of delivering youth provision spanning public, private, and civil society partners to deliver excellent provision for young people in some areas. Traditional organisations like the YMCA, Scouts, Guides, Boys and Girls Clubs, Woodcraft Folk have also innovated to keep youth work alive.

However, the landscape for the delivery of youth work is now much more fragmented than it once was, with provision split across diverse institutions and individuals operating in different contexts and structures. Voluntary sector innovation has not happened everywhere, and is very reliant on talented individuals in committed organisations. This has led to a "postcode lottery" of opportunity as to where we find youth work and youth workers.

Continuing austerity and funding pressures have also led to competition for resources between voluntary and statutory providers, undermining the drive for quality youth work provision, partnership working and innovative practice.

Local Youth Partnerships

We want to rebuild a youth service for the modern age – one that brings together fragmented services and celebrates diversity of provision.

The Young People's Foundations developed by the John Lyon's Charity provides a fantastic partnership model, bringing together the public, private and voluntary sectors to effect positive change for young people.

Under Labour, local authorities will be responsible for establishing and facilitating LYPs, which will be shaped as a public health model for youth provision. Stakeholders from across the community will be encouraged and supported to work together to understand the social development journey of young people in their local area and to map how they can best support young people's needs. These partnerships could be established along ceremonial counties or local authority areas.

LYPs will have a broad membership of all organisations that work with children and young people locally. Membership will be made up of, but not limited to: the local authority, youth workers, voluntary organisations, unions, local schools, police, social services, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Housing Associations, faith groups, uniformed groups, football clubs and sports organisations, the corporate sector and funder representation. This collaborative partnership model will ensure that young people receive holistic support from public services and voluntary organisations. Young people and their parents will also have a single point of access to understand what is available locally.

Just as the local authority has to secure sufficient school places even when it does not directly deliver schools (whether currently under Academies or even previously under Local Management of Schools), the responsibility for securing access to youth work and a local youth service will be under the local authority (even if delivered through the local partnership and voluntary and community sector). Therefore, local authorities will be required to make provision for and work with LYPs. Those partnerships will exist as a separate function to teams delivering youth work and be responsible purely for facilitating youth provision in the local area.

The Department for Education and the national body for youth work will provide guidance on how to set up and run LYPs. In areas where partnership models already exist, local authorities will not need to establish LYPs. However, they will need to demonstrate that existing partnerships fulfil all of the functions outlined in departmental guidance and seek approval of designation from the Secretary of State.

Below is an overview of the key responsibilities of LYPs inspired by the Young People's Foundations model:

Facilitating youth provision in the local area. This will include:

- mapping provision, identifying gaps, and contracting services between local partners according to local need
- mapping workforce development need and project support
- organising sector (and location) specific capacity building, including training events, advice sessions and a forum for organisations to share ideas and best practice
- coordinating sector networking opportunities and support services
- developing strong and structural relationships with other statutory services and the public sector, and means for these relationships to be fostered in local areas
- providing a single point of access for local young people and parents to understand what is available locally
- providing local leadership in evaluation and evidence

Creating and sharing space between local partners. This will include:

- sharing venue and delivery spaces between members
- developing a 'venue bank' that facilitates this
- identifying appropriate buildings and if necessary their refurbishment, taking into account the longer term revenue costs for capital development

Raising additional funding schemes for local partners. This will include:

- securing funding from new sources into the local area, including corporate and individual funding streams, trusts and foundations
- distributing a small grants pot locally to active voluntary youth organisations

We recognise that the needs of young people will diverge amongst different localities and regions. There is huge variability in the services available to young people, particularly in rural settings as well as suburbs. LYPs will not be a "one size fits all approach" and each LYP will develop its own approach to meet the needs of the local area.

However, all LYPs will all share common values.

Inclusivity – membership is open to any group working with children and young people, with no limit on numbers. A fair voice will be given to all organisations taking into account size and their ability to reach different groups of young people.

Diversity – there is a need for variety in order to meet the needs of as many young people as possible; to include smaller grass roots organisations to help retain their local focus and community youth organisations that have the strongest relationships with young people.

Collaboration – LYPs do not directly deliver services, but commission services via their membership; they will co-ordinate, network, fundraise and build evidence to benefit their whole membership. They will not compete against their members nor will they build up a large central workforce.

Place-based – for sustained partnerships designed for the long term, beyond the funding cycles of specific programmes or local authority terms of office; where the needs of children and young people must be addressed by the public, voluntary and private sectors as a cross-sector group rather than individually.

Please see appendix for model.

Regional, national and international collaboration

Youth workers operate not only in their local communities, but also within a wider regional, national, and international context. These partnerships and networks are extremely valuable, proving collaborative leadership for the sector and sharing best practice, knowledge, support and resources.

The Network of Regional Youth Work Units (RYWUs) such as Youth Focus North West and Partnership for Young London provide good examples of how this could provide great value in terms of benefits to young people and the youth workers who support them. However, this is not consistent across the country, with only four of the nine regions benefitting from the full RYWU offer due to funding challenges. There is a real need to establish RYWUs in areas where they do not exist. Greater regional investment will help secure such RYWUs or equivalent for all regions, supported through the national body for youth work.

In England the NYA's Education & Training Standards Sub-Committee (ETS) leads on the validation and standard-setting for qualifications in youth work in England, through an agreement with the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth & Community Workers (JNC).

The United Nations also provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world. This includes the internationally agreed World Programme for Action for Youth and more recent resolutions on youth which are bi-annually sponsored at the United Nations by Portugal and Senegal.

To support regional, national and international collaboration a Labour government will:

- Mandate the national body for youth work to co-ordinate and support regional youth work units and co-ordinate on behalf of the UK with international partners
- Ensure young people have access to local, regional, national and international visits as part of every local offer, as outlined in the National Charter for Youth Work
- Fund regional networks and youth work specific infrastructure providers to support local authorities and their partners in every English region
- Work with devolved administrations across all nations within the UK to align existing youth work provision with Scotland, Wales and Ireland
- Maintain a close future relationship with the EU and cooperate with Member States and other European countries to co-ordinate policies in the field of youth
- Ensure that Britain remains part of the Erasmus scheme and the European Solidary Corp so that British students have the same educational opportunities after we leave the EU
- Re-engage in youth discussions at the UN, consider re-establishing the UN Youth Programme through the British Youth Council and look at synergies between WPAY and its successors and the domestic youth strategy
- Incorporate relevant areas of World Programme on Action for Youth in the national youth strategy
- Consider re-establishing a youth delegate programme at the United Nations with the British Youth Council
- Restore international exchanges and youth study links for youth services with the assistance of the British Youth Council

6. Rebuilding the workforce

The dismantling of the workforce

The youth work workforce has experienced significant change under this government. Post 2010, most Principal Youth Officers – the strategic head of a local authority youth service – lost their jobs, along with most local authority based training officers and the part time workforce. According to figures from Local Government Association (LGA) Workers Survey, 14,500 youth and community workers have lost their jobs since 2008 (58 per cent), including 5,500 fulltime equivalent qualified youth workers (55 per cent).

The decline of professional youth workers has also led to an increased dependency on the time and skills of volunteers. Without volunteers, youth work provision in England would be severely limited. Volunteering also offer young people and adults personal development and leadership opportunities that builds core skills, which can help support their transition into further learning and employment.

However, this dependence on volunteers has led to many services suffering from a lack of management, qualified youth workers, and administrative resources. At the same time a loss of youth work volunteers who have not had the coordination or support for them to keep contributing to their communities, losing valuable role models for young people.

We have also seen a significant reduction in recent years of the numbers of JNC degree programmes in England and the number of students enrolling on undergraduate courses. There are now only 39 validated higher education youth work courses on offer across 28 universities and colleges in the UK as of June 2018. In 2007/08 there were more than 60 courses on offer from more than 40 institutions. Since then the number of degrees, graduate certificates, masters and postgraduate diplomas in youth work programmes have been falling. Whilst Higher Education Institution providers teach against the JNC standards for youth and community work, many of their students enter employment that increasingly doesn't employ them as youth workers or on JNC terms and conditions.

Defining the workforce

The creation of secure and permanent full-time youth work positions will be priority for a future Labour government. However, we recognise it is very challenging trying to define the current workforce and what is needed to deliver a statutory youth service.

A Labour government will:

- **Reinstate the national audit previously carried out by NYA of all upper-tier local authorities to determine local authority provision and better understand the picture at a national level**
- **Develop a national youth workforce development strategy to recruit, train and sustain youth workers with national occupational standards, qualifications, skills and professional development and collective bargaining through the JNC**
- **Require local authorities to work with their partners to map workforce development needs and project supply of youth work. Overseen and supported by the national body for youth work, this will include joined up dialogue with universities, regional youth work units, training providers and other key stakeholders in workforce planning**

Creating more professional youth workers positions

The creation of secure and permanent full-time JNC qualified youth work positions will be a priority for Labour. Without this secure and qualified workforce, our vision for a statutory youth service cannot be implemented.

The National Youth Agency (NYA) estimated that 9,500 qualified youth workers are needed to run an open-access, universal youth service. This is based on the assumption that there should be two full-time, JNC professionally qualified youth workers per secondary school catchment area, matched with a full-time equivalent of part-time staff split 30:70 for new 'Youth Work Leaders' and 'Youth Work Assistants'.

In a similar way to schools having a clear structure of professional roles and ratios – of senior management, teachers, teaching assistants and supporting services such as specialist teachers and school counsellors etc – there should be standard expectations of the ratio of professional youth workers, volunteers and other professionals with youth work skills.

However, the total number of youth workers we need to recruit and budget for will be dependent on the reinstatement of a local authority audit and the number of LYPs established in the first year. Only once this is achieved will we have a better understanding of how many youth workers already work in open-access provision that could be included in a national youth service.

Improving pathways

Most people enter youth work either as a volunteer, paid worker or apprentice. However, we recognise that becoming a professional youth worker can be challenging for many people who do not want to go to university full time. Education and training are significant in contributing to the overall quality of youth work and in sustaining good practice. Urgent attention needs to be paid to how to redress the erosion of infrastructure to support the organisation, delivery and assessment of level 2 and 3 qualifications. The regular supply of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will contribute to the overall quality of youth work; ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are continually refreshed in tune with contemporary issues (e.g. youth violence and mental health) experienced by young people.

A Labour government will:

- Improve pathways into professional youth work. This will have clear levels covering volunteer involvement, through to youth support workers (level 3), youth workers (level 6), and youth service local authority management levels
- Implement a nationwide youth work apprenticeship scheme, to provide an alternative pathway. This will all be in line with JNC validations and criteria
- Create good quality and accessible (paper and online) careers information to explain what youth work is, what roles it involves, how to get involved as a youth worker and what qualification and experience routes and pathways are available
- Create good quality and accessible material for employers, so that they sufficiently understand the qualification requirements of the profession and can see how these fit with service design
- Make the level 3 qualification in youth work eligible for UCAS points, giving more young people an entry level opportunity and exposure to youth work practices, and schools more incentive to offer this as a part of the curriculum
- Enable courses that top-up and transfer between linked professions and varied career paths, recognising the common elements of professional formation and building from there
- Ensure validation and quality assurance processes that are relevant, up to date and protect the value of professional formation for youth work
- Scrap tuition fees and bring back maintenance grants in both further and higher education, making lifelong learning accessible for all as part of a National Education Service

Professional development and status

The Labour Party is committed to building the capacity of the workforce and improving access to continuous professional development for youth workers. Volunteers need to be recruited, trained, supported, retained and celebrated. We also want to strengthen the professional status of youth work to ensure it has parity with other workforce groups.

A Labour government will create:

- A statutory national register for youth workers with a revocable licence to practice. This will provide CPD resources for staff and youth support workers, and voluntary youth workers will have the opportunity to become participants in the scheme at an appropriate level
- A set of criteria for Youth Work Volunteers and Youth Leaders so that they are recognised as legitimate actors and consider how they would be recognised in any national register which would also need to interplay with DBS
- A legally protected title for youth workers, which will only be available to those with approved qualifications and experience. This new title will be protected by Parliamentary statute and will cover paid professional staff with provisions for quality assurance of volunteer staff. This will go alongside a code of ethics for youth work

We believe that a legally protected title for youth workers, overseen by the national body for youth work and backed by mandatory registration, will promote youth work as a distinct practice, support the professionalism of the sector and ensure children and young people are safe. Without this regulation, anybody can claim they are a 'youth worker' and this is putting children and young people at risk.

However, we recognise that there is fundamental tension between the desire for recognition and support for professionalisation amongst many in the youth sector, and the risk of placing undue barriers in the way of volunteers and youth workers who do not have formal or validated qualifications. Therefore, we will establish a working group with the sector on how this will be achieved, with further consultation with the sector.

National pay scales and conditions

The JNC represents and provides tangible recognition of the professional identity of qualified workers. The findings from the APPG for Youth Affairs make clear that the JNC terms and conditions are fit for purpose and supported widely across the sector, including by employers from statutory and voluntary sector youth work providers.

Under Labour, the JNC through the national body for youth work will:

- Undertake the professional validation of training and qualification programmes, approved by both the Education Training Standards Committee (ETS) and the national body for youth work
- Be directly incorporated into any protection of title or youth work registered through ETS and the national body for youth work
- Validate and scrutinise training across the spectrum, from volunteer levels to higher education programmes, this would ensure a greater consistency in the training offer and that there is a clear pathway and staged learning process

Safeguarding

In addition to training and qualifications in youth work practice, youth workers need to be aware of and confident in implementing safeguarding processes relating to young people. They should understand risks young people face and be familiar with and able to use local protocols for assessing and referring young people for specialist support.

Local authorities will have important roles to play in this, as do individual youth sector employers, who should ensure that their workforce is fully competent in working collaboratively with other professions and agencies involved in young people's lives.



7. National leadership

An absence of national leadership

Over the last decade the government that has failed to prioritise the needs of young people at a national level, which has resulted in a vacuum of leadership and policy development. In 2013 the former education secretary stated that youth work was not a priority for central government and the responsibility for youth policy was moved from the Department for Education to the Cabinet Office later that year. In November 2016 the Cabinet Office made a commitment to create a new three-year youth policy statement to give “a clear narrative and vision” for how to help young people. However, this promise was dropped a year later when responsibility for youth policy was transferred from the Cabinet Office to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The current location of youth work within DCMS has led to renewed understanding and useful promotional work, with recognition in the government’s Civil Society Strategy that youth services can be transformational. The government is in the process of revising the statutory guidance for local authorities on services and activities to improve young people’s wellbeing and committed to review the statutory guidance for youth work provision. However, funding has flowed away from rather than followed this ambition. The responsibility of this important policy area sits under the Minister for Civil Society and DCMS, a large portfolio covering civil society, Government Inclusive Economy Unit, loneliness, ceremonials, youth and social action. As a result, youth policy has not received the attention from Ministers it rightfully deserves.

A holistic approach to national policymaking

Labour is committed to putting forward an ambitious policy agenda for young people when we are in government. This will require a holistic approach to policymaking, working across government departments. However, we recognise that this policy document focuses only on Labour’s vision for youth work, which is just once aspect of a wider youth policy agenda.

A Labour government will:

- **Appoint a Minister for Children and Young People responsible for the national youth service. The Minister will sit within the Department for Education supporting the Secretary of State**
- **Consider establishing a cabinet sub-committee for children and young people to facilitate cross-departmental co-ordination (in effect youth-proofing policies)**
- **Publish a National Strategy for Youth Work, followed by a cross-departmental youth policy offer**

A strengthened national body for youth work

The NYA is the Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) for youth work. It is responsible for the validation and standard-setting for qualifications in youth work in England, through its agreement with the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth &

Community Workers (JNC). Up until 2010 the NYA was funded by the government. However, the decision to abolish central government grants from 2011 meant that the NYA has not had sufficient resources to secure the future of youth work.

A strong national body is vital for achieving Labour's vision for youth services, which is why we will work with the NYA to strengthen its role and incorporate the distribution of funds to local authorities and LYPs. The national body for youth work and funding agency will be located within the Department for Education. This strengthened national body will include significant representation from young people and their organisations, and a voice for workers, via trade unions, on the body's governance.

It will carry out the following functions:

- Audit youth provision across all upper-tier local authorities, including measuring levels of workers, buildings, and other fixed assets
- Develop a resourcing strategy for workforce development for youth work, in consultation with national and local partners
- Frame standards for 'sufficiency'
- Approve LYP plans
- Distribute funding to local authorities and LYPs
- Monitor local roll-out and support the development of LYPs
- Advise on professional and service standards
- Advise the government on policy development
- Evaluate impact and quality assurance
- Grant aid to key national bodies with specific functions, such as British Youth Council, as well as regional network bodies
- Support local commissioners and providers through regional networks and youth work specific infrastructure providers

8. Inspections and evaluation

The abolition of youth work inspections and Ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) currently inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. They also inspect services that care for children and young people.

Before 2010 Ofsted inspected local authority youth services and published reports to improve the overall quality of youth work provision. Each youth service inspected was required to produce an action plan in response to the key issues for attention identified in the report. This stopped when the Tories came to power alongside the annual audit of youth work.

However, the current inspection system for schools is a major driver of high levels of teacher workload and stress, which contributes to the ongoing crisis in teacher recruitment and retention. In too many cases, Ofsted's judgements and grades reflect the affluence of a school's intake and the social class of its pupils – not the performance of the school.

A Labour government will:

- **Abolish Ofsted and replace the current high-stakes school inspection system with a new inspectorate for education as part of Labour's National Education Service**
- **Launch a "school improvement revolution" in office through a nationwide school-led peer review improvement programme based on the London Challenge model, aimed at supporting schools in deprived areas with challenging intakes**

Current challenges measuring youth work

Over the last decade, short term funding, unrealistic delivery expectations and the competitive nature of youth sector funding make it almost impossible for youth organisations to carry out longitudinal studies that truly measure the impact of an intervention on young people months or even years later in their lives.

Much work has been done recently on attempting to tie outcomes and impact of youth work to quantitative measures in order to measure 'efficiency'. This may be appropriate for targeted services with specific and narrow set of outcomes and a structure set of engagement. However, this is not appropriate for universal provision – the heart of youth work – where young people engage through a non-formal setting and there is no pre-determined outcome.

Evaluation is often disconnected from practice where outcome monitoring and measurement is undertaken in isolation from quality assurance, resulting in limited ability to link the experiences of young people participating in programmes with changes in their lives.

In England, resourcing for large scale and transferable evaluation approaches in youth work has also been very limited: the current investment in national evaluation of the Youth Investment Fund is the first government-backed evaluation of youth work at more than simply local level for decades.

Moving towards effective evaluation

We recognise that there is not a quick or clear solution to change the overarching culture of evidence and evaluation within youth work. Funders, policymakers, evaluators, sector leaders and youth work organisations need to work together to ensure that evaluation is properly resourced to generate effective evidence. This will require a sector wide effort.

Local areas will also have widely varying different needs and demographics. Universality and targeted provision will have different outcomes for different age ranges and demographic groups.

However, a Labour government will provide the strategic leadership that is needed to move towards stronger, more effective evidence of youth work that focuses on the long term. Evaluation should seek to reduce the time burden on youth organisations, youth professionals, and young people. While evaluation is very important, time that youth professionals spend on paperwork is time that they do not spend on other aspects of their work.

Under Labour, there will not be a 'one size fits all' approach but rather a set of principles underpinning effective evaluation and accountability, building on best practices. The following principles will enable and encourage open and non-formal approaches to youth work:

- **Appropriate and proportionate for the nature and objectives of the provision as well as the young people taking part**
- **Embedded and actionable so that evaluation efforts are focused on improving provision for young people in a practical way**
- **Shared and collective in terms of approaches, language and measures used so that data can be aggregated, compared and understood – ultimately contributing to an effective evidence base for youth work**

We will also reintroduce a specialist core of inspections through a quality standards and inspection regime to monitor and report on youth work delivery. Under Labour, this will be organised by the national body for youth work, including self-evaluation and a specialist core of inspections.

We will also consider how youth work inspections will be integrated with the new inspectorate for education as part of Labour's National Education Service. A new system could involve the national body for youth work carrying out regular 'health checks' and the new inspectorate intervening where there is a major problem or a 'deep dive' is needed. Under Labour, all aspects of inspections for formal and non-formal education will be linked to continuous improvement but with the intention of being supportive rather than punitive.

9. Sustainable funding

The impact of austerity

According to the LGA Labour group, councils will have lost 60p out of every £1 of government funding between 2010 and 2020. In 2019/20, the government is going to cut another £1.3bn from the Revenue Support Grant, and LGA analysis shows that by 2025 there will be a £7.8bn funding gap across local government.

Alongside extreme cuts to local authority budgets, the government has also made significant cuts to welfare and other public services which has created significant hardship for vulnerable children and young people. In response, local authorities have been forced to reduce non-care services to the bare legal minimum to pay for rocketing demand.

With pressures on children's services generally intensifying and limited statutory provision to protect youth services, funding for youth work faced disproportionate levels of cuts and quickly disappeared. New analysis conducted by Labour of data published by the Department for Education reveals a real-terms annual cut of £1 billion (73 percent) on services for young people since 2010.

Government investment

Labour wants local authorities to provide all young people with access to youth work provision that matches their needs. Young people spend 85 per cent of their time outside of the school environment – the state should therefore invest in young people where they spend the majority of their time

To support this policy, we will provide funding for local authorities to set up and facilitate LYPs. LYPs will be required to submit local plans to the national body for youth work and funding agency to access and draw down funding from a new ring-fenced Youth Services Fund. Guidance will be set out to assist them in the process.

The Youth Services Fund will have its own distribution formula based on numbers of 11–19 year olds and information representing local needs. The formula allocates a range of values for each local authority, with additional funds allocated to areas with higher levels of need, such as areas of deprivation and sparsely populated areas. Local Partnerships will also be expected to increase funding for youth work through other resources including working with partners to draw in funding from external sources. As with our last manifesto, we will be clear and transparent about where all the funding for our additional spending commitments will come from.

10. Conclusion

This paper has set out Labour's vision for rebuilding youth services, the priorities we will look to advance, and our plans for using the levers of government to ensure we achieve them. It is, however, only the start of the journey.

We recognise that this policy document focuses on youth work, which is just once aspect of a wider youth policy agenda. Under Labour, youth policy and programmes will be co-ordinated between central government departments so that we can deliver an ambitious policy agenda that will transform the country and radically change young people's lives.



Appendix

THE NATIONAL CHARTER FOR YOUTH WORK

The Labour Party is committed to working with young people to build a nation where they are safe and secure in the modern world, treated fairly, supported in the present, and ambitious for their future:

- Skilled and equipped to learn and earn
- Positive health and wellbeing
- Active members of their communities
- Happy and confident in their future

The purpose of a statutory youth service will be to work with young people to ensure the personal, social and political development of young people for each to realise their full potential in a modern, connected world. All young people will be entitled to access inclusive, open youth work based on the sole criteria of being young.

The functions of a statutory youth service will be to work with young people to:

- Provide a safe place to be creative, develop social groups and friendships, with a trusted adult to enable and encourage young people to recognise their strengths and assets
- Support National Citizen Service (NCS) accredited youth social action and other forms of leadership, and encourage young people to set up and run their own activities and organisations, with appropriate guidance
- Promote active citizenship and ensure that their voices are heard, treated fairly, and involved in the community with influence in local decision-making to support their participation in democracy
- Build the aspirations of young people and promote healthy, active lifestyles including participation in education, arts, culture, physical activity and sport, and international visits

In carrying out its functions the youth service will:

- Promote community cohesion and inclusion, and develop equality opportunities
- Address social inequalities and support vulnerable young people, including discrimination and racial disparities and access to opportunities for young people from deprived backgrounds
- Challenge the emergence of anti-social behaviour and divisive ideologies before they became social problems
- Support groups with specific identities, such as young LGBT+ people, young people with special needs, young women, or specific religious communities
- Work in partnership with other public, private and voluntary services for the interests of young people

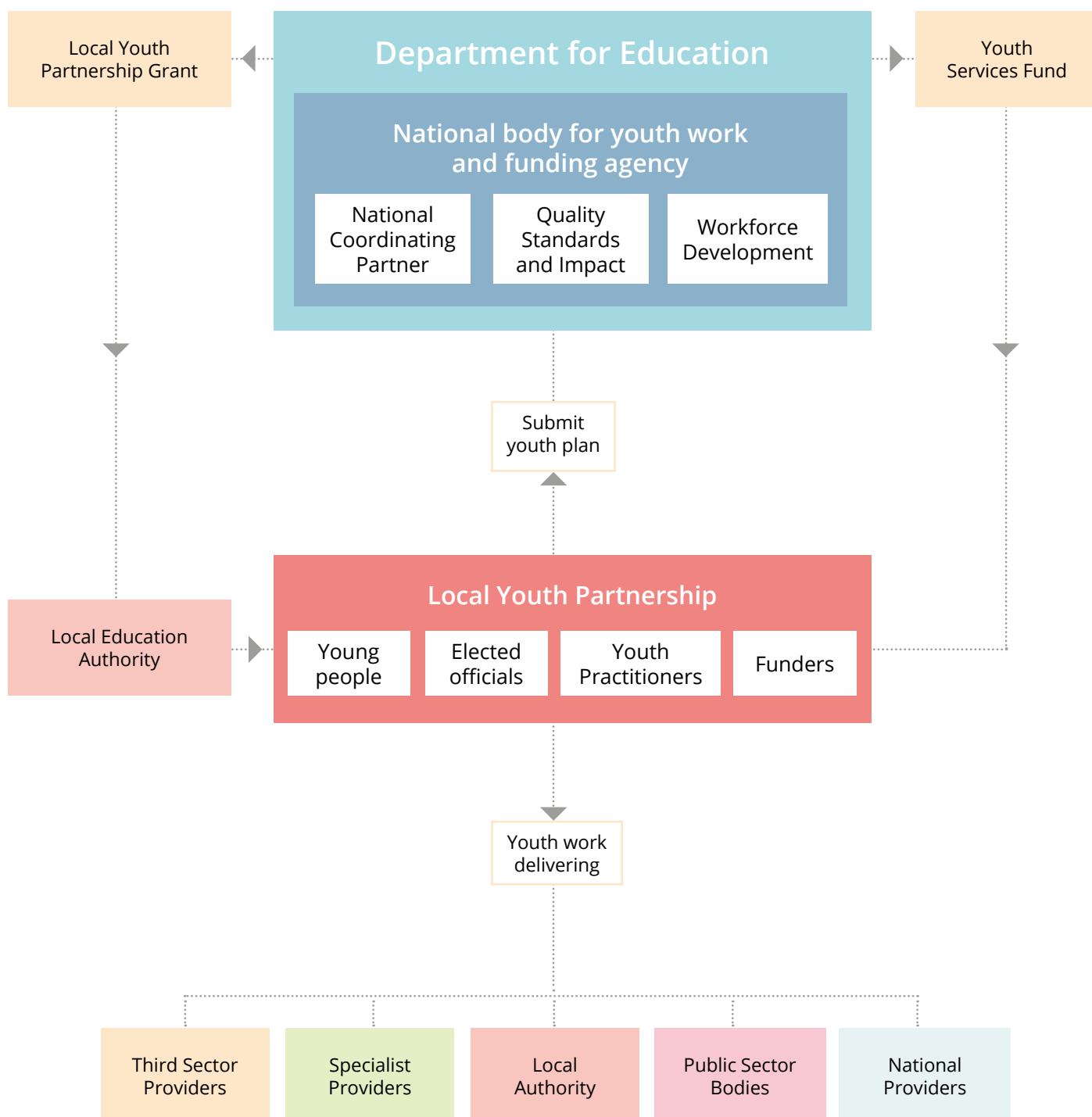
- Signpost and connect to other organisations and services providing support to young people, including education and employment opportunities, and information, advice and counselling provisions
- Ensure the active voluntary participation of young people in the specification, governance, delivery and scrutiny of services

KEY TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Throughout this policy paper, we have used the following terminology and definitions:

- 'Youth' is the developmental phase between childhood and adulthood. Typically this starts around the beginning of puberty and finishes in late teens but for many young people – dependent on personal, social and economic factors – it can start and finish much later
- 'Youth Service' refers to youth work delivered directly by a local authority
- 'Youth provision', 'youth work', or 'the youth sector' refers to all youth work delivered in an area, including local authority youth services, public service mutual organisations, youth organisations in the voluntary and community sector, and social enterprises
- 'Open youth work' or 'universal youth work' refers to youth work intended for all young people in an area, open to them without "pre-enrolling". Young people join on a voluntary basis and they have the agency to stop taking part when the time is right for them
- 'Youth groups' refers to groups often run by voluntary providers which require young people to be pre-enrolled
- 'Youth worker' is a qualified professional in youth work
- 'Youth leader' or 'Youth work volunteer' refers to adult volunteers who support youth groups and youth services under the supervision or guidance of a qualified or established youth work organisation
- 'Targeted youth work' refers to youth work that targets particular groups of young people, usually those who are disadvantaged or socially excluded
- 'Statutory' refers to obligations in statute
- 'National body for youth work' refers to the National Youth Agency

NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE STRUCTURE



Notes

[illegible]

