

Youth Work **Strategy** **2020 – 2024**

Approved by:

**SDC Community Services and Licensing Committee
on 28 November 2019**

Introduction

Whilst the youth sector continues to evolve regionally and nationally, a period of stability has been seen in Stroud district over the last 8 years. A number of town and parish communities still generally responded well to the need for locally supported youth provision, however this remains more challenging for some than others. Our consultation with them in 2019 was fed into the creation of this strategy. The Councils previous youth work strategies and subsequent delivery of youth work services has enabled the voice of young people to support such communities to plan, build and develop a range of provisions - the two tier format of local youth forum groups and Stroud District Youth Council (SDYC) acting as the recognised youth voice vehicle, has remained at the hub of this development.

The Council's Community Services and Licensing Committee (through a Task and Finish Group) have overseen a review of the service and been directly involved in consultation programmes and developing this strategy for 2020-2024. Having considered the strengths of the previous strategies, this version principally continues with delivering established community based provision, but also looks to increase the active involvement of young people in Council decision-making, particularly on matters that affect them.

Essentially this strategy maintains consideration of the national Hear by Right standards (adopted by SDC in April 2008) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, with particular regard to Articles 12 and 15.

Youth Work in Context

The key focus of youth work is to *'enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential'*. Youth Work National Occupational Standards (2014): www.nya.org.uk

Youth Participation in Context

Whilst youth work seeks to promote young people's personal and social development through a wide range of activities, youth participation can be defined as their being actively involved in matters of concern to them. The following statement clarifies this type of youth work; *'Youth Participation is the process by which children and young people influence decision making which brings about change in them, others, their service and their communities'*. National Hear by Right Standards Framework: www.nya.org.uk

Youth Voice and Youth Voice Vehicle

The term 'Youth Voice' is widely used in relation to Youth Participation. The Councils' delivery system and structure is referred to as the 'Youth Voice Vehicle'.

Aim

The Council will:

- Demonstrate active leadership on the delivery of youth and community work in partnership with young people and their communities.
- Encourage communities to further develop quality educational and fun programmes for young people in their locality.
- Support and deliver professional youth and community work practice and interpret current and future national policies.
- Develop a framework for locally supported projects to grow, whilst encouraging young people to have a voice, volunteer and become active citizens in their community.

Objectives

The Council will:

1. Ensure professional youth and community workers (and level three qualified youth support workers) deliver practice in larger youth populated areas of the district, referred to as 'localities'. This involves;
 - Leading the facilitation of local youth forum groups (acting as part of the recognised local youth voice vehicle)
 - Delivering youth and community work projects and programmes that have been informed and where possible, led by young people
 - Liaising and co-operating with local youth partnership groups, parish and town councils, youth centre management committees to support community cohesion.
 - Liaising and co-operating with youth groups and schools to encourage young people to be active in the Stroud Youth Voice Vehicle.
 - Ensuring projects and programmes link appropriately to district youth council based work (Objective 2)
2. Ensure professional youth and community workers (and level three qualified youth support workers) deliver practice for district youth council based participation work. This involves;
 - Continuation of current youth participation / youth voice programmes at local and district level
 - Facilitating specific issue based projects e.g. local democracy/political education, health and wellbeing, creating youth friendly GP surgeries
 - Ensuring projects and programmes link appropriately to locality based work (Objective 1)

3. Facilitate a district youth work network for practitioners, providers and commissioners (inc. parish and town councils, management committees and local partnership groups) from all sectors.
4. Continue to develop practice within the Council with regards to the national Hear by Right standards, to support a culture of change towards greater youth participation across services. Undertake the national participation pledge and Hear by Right Award programme.
5. Develop methods to increase youth voice in the Councils decision-making processes.
6. Develop an enhanced social media presence for interaction with young people and their supporters.
7. Call upon its Councillors (elected members) to further champion the youth voice programmes. Where possible they will encourage providers of other services for young people (including statutory services) to enable their service users to be active in the Stroud Youth Voice vehicle.

How the service will be delivered and managed

The service will be delivered and managed by the Council's Community Services, with a small team of specialist youth and community workers acting as officers for the work. This will enable a flexible and efficient approach for delivery and monitoring of the service, in which to meet the various aspects of the strategy.

Real Open-Access Provision:

This service enables young people in the district to have their voice heard (by professionals and trained young people) through various access points that are genuinely open to all young people between ages of 11 and 19. They are as follows;

- face to face engagement
- social media
- phone and email
- dedicated website
- through an active youth voice representative
- open consultation
- specific issue-based surveys

Subsequently, young people can become actively involved in a locality based community group (i.e. local youth forum groups) and aspire to greater participation, through a dedicated system and structure that is recognised locally and nationally.

Advocacy and being non-judgemental:

Youth and community workers are required through professional conduct and duty of care to be non-judgemental. They will advocate on behalf of young people when their voice is unable to be heard.

Young person informed and led projects and programmes

Throughout the youth voice vehicle projects and programmes will be determined by young people. Some of these will be issue based and will require response from the council and other partner organisations.

These will broadly fit into the themes that have been identified by young people as being important e.g. local democracy, environment, health and wellbeing. However these may potentially change as young people see fit.

Input of Resources

The Council will allocate a budget to support the delivery of this strategy.

It is also noted that young people provide a resource as volunteers, particularly with regards to designing and delivering consultation work and issue based projects, linking with community organisations and partnerships. Such volunteer hours are calculated by the National Lottery at between £7.14 per hour and £21.42 per hour. This equates to approx. between £13,750 and £31,130 worth of volunteering carried out in one year*. It is also estimated that youth work delivers at least £7 in value for every £1 it costs**

*April 2018 to March 2019

**Youth Link Scotland

Evaluation and Outcomes

Previously developed systems to measure outcomes of the service have evolved and the Council will continue to evaluate service delivery with regards to each of the following objectives:

Objective 1 – Up to 9 local youth forums will have been facilitated to function as recognised diverse groups and respectively seen as the active voice for young people in each of the localities identified. Active representation to Stroud District Youth Council will be evident. Active relationships with local youth groups, schools and colleges will be evident.

Youth work programmes will have been planned delivered and then evaluated focusing on personal and social development using the national Catalyst Outcomes Framework for guidance. This will work in accordance with approaches common to youth and community work practice. The management and accountability of staff will have been monitored accordingly.

Objective 2 – Similarly to Objective 1, the work in relation to the district youth council and its issue based projects will have focused on participants' personal and social development using the national Catalyst Outcomes Framework – this will have typically included approaches common to youth and community work practice.

Objective 3 – A district wide youth work network will have functioned for the benefit of all stakeholders. It will provide a cross sector support mechanism for various youth work projects and services in the district.

Objective 4 – A new submission will be made to national Hear by Right Standards award programme (developed and hosted by the National Youth Agency) in relation to actively involving young people in service design and delivery.

Objective 5 – Young people will have the opportunity to give input into each Committee's Forward Plan. They will have been consulted more specifically and broadly on matters that may affect them. Young people will have the opportunity to get involved with the Councils performance monitoring across policy making and service delivery.

Objective 6 – The Councils Communications Team will support the increase of social media coverage on appropriate platforms. This interaction with young people and their supporters will be evidenced with regards to youth service projects and programmes.

Objective 7 – An increase in support from other service providers will be evident. Young people (known to respective service providers) will have engaged with local youth forum groups and their associated projects and programmes.

Sustainability

The sustainability of long term local youth provision is vital, particularly at times of austerity and social economic change. Strong indications remain that positive activity projects, in relation to service design and the delivery process will attract greater funding, when young people are involved. Similarly, whether changes should be made for the future, the quality of service provision now relies on the active voice of young people to exist.

The community development based approach to youth work (outlined in this strategy document) enables young people to learn specific skills and become empowered enough to help their peers and represent them through active involvement in decision-making on issues that affect them. This has been demonstrated by the outcomes of the Council's strategy during the last eight years.

Complementary to the main objectives and to support a more sustainable future for young people's active involvement, the Council will continue to explore over the period of this strategy the following point;

If and how, a youth development trust could enhance the Councils youth voice vehicle in the future.

<u>Locality Area & Youth Population 10 - 19 years*</u>		<u>Typically Related Secondary School</u>
Berkeley Vale	736	Various
Chalford (Inc Bisley)	1126	Thomas Keble
Cainscross (Inc Lower Randwick)	1081	Archway and Maidenhill
Cam & Dursley (Inc Coaley & Uley)	1911	Rednock
Hardwicke	784	Maidenhill and Severn Vale
Nailsworth & Minchinhampton (Inc Horsley)	1201	Sir William Romney
Stonehouse (Inc The Stanley's)	1262	Maidenhill
Stroud Town and Valleys (Inc Rodborough)	2048	Marling and Stroud High School

Wotton under Edge (Inc Kingswood)	1137	Katharine Lady Berkeley
-----------------------------------	------	-------------------------

*Gloucestershire County Council Ward Population Estimates Mid-2018 (Maiden)

Contribution to the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy

This strategy positively contributes to the Council's legal duty as a public sector organisation under the Equality Act 2010. It will enable the Council to consider the needs of young people when designing and delivering services, particularly in the context of them being a protected group. In direct relation to the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, it will help foster good relations between people of different social and cultural backgrounds as well as contribute to cross generational liaisons with those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It will encourage young people to participate in public life or other activities, where their participation is disproportionately low. It will also help tackle prejudice through promotion of greater understanding among different communities.

Additionally, this strategy will help deliver the Council's vision of **"Leading a community that is making Stroud District a better place to live, work and visit for everyone"**

Summary

This is a comprehensive youth work strategy, which follows previous strategies in being relative to the diverse needs of young people and their communities in the district, whilst also bringing a sense of cohesion, particularly for those who feel marginalised. It continues the Council's commitment to young people and delivery of good practice that has enabled them to have a voice and be heard.

The strategy objectives will support the need for both the public sector and the voluntary sector to work in partnership, thus designing and delivering longer term sustainable provision underpinned by what young people say they want and need.

Essentially this strategy recognises the input of others, namely young people and community organisations. It continues the way in which the Council can work with them to achieve outcomes that are reflective of a modern forward thinking approach to youth and community work in a rural district. It will therefore help empower our communities towards a sustainable future and give young people opportunities to develop personally and socially.