



Youth Work Ireland
Cavan Monaghan

DETACHED INDUCTION PACK

A RESOURCE FOR ALL DETACHED YOUTH WORKERS



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WHAT IS DETACHED YOUTH WORK?

Detached youth work is a distinct form of work with young people. As with all youth work it uses the principles and practices of informal education to engage young people in constructive dialogue, within a broad agenda of personal and social development. The work is underpinned by mutual trust and respect and responds to the needs of young people. The basis of the relationship between the worker and the young person is mutual acceptance and parity. Traditional notions of adult power and authority are brought into sharp focus. All youth work seeks to work on and from young people's 'territory' (as determined by their definitions of space, needs, interests, concerns and lifestyles).

Detached youth work, however, is distinct from all other forms of youth work as this concept of territory focuses primarily on the geographical: detached youth workers work where young people have chosen to be, whether this is on the streets, cafes, shopping centres etc. workers make contact with young people wherever they are. So detached youth work is often free from the constraints of centre based youth work – where buildings are specifically set up for the purpose of youth work. Detached youth workers don't have to manage a building or property. This is not to say buildings won't be used; indeed they sometimes become a feature of more developed practice. But in detached youth work, contact happens on the street, and relationships are developed there too. Detached youth work is above all, about working flexibly. As they don't have to look after buildings they can use their geographical flexibility to best meet the needs of young people. They celebrate the uncertainty implied by an open ended way of working and value this for its democratic credentials.

They recognize its effectiveness in engaging, in particular, with those young people whose lifestyles are sometimes chaotic and sit uncomfortably with order and prescription. The experience of many detached youth workers is that imposing an agenda acts as a barrier to working with young people, many of whom are already disengaged from formal learning. The success of youth work comes from making good judgments in relation to these risks. Pushing too hard can distance young people. Not pushing enough can fail to challenge and inspire them. The agenda must, therefore, emerge from a mutually respectful relationship, where hearing the other's voice is as important as articulating one's own. The concept of negotiation seems to embody this; it does not suggest control, domination or license. It accords instead status to both parties and value to their opinions.

WHAT WE DO

Detached workers provide confidential advice, information and support on any or all of the following issues which young people may experience.

- Homelessness
- Education, employment and training
- Sexual health education
- Drugs and alcohol use/misuse, including information on drugs and the law
- Crime diversion including anti-social behaviour and its consequences
- Counselling, dealing with issues such as stress and depression

DETACHED YOUTH WORK DOES NOT AIM TO:

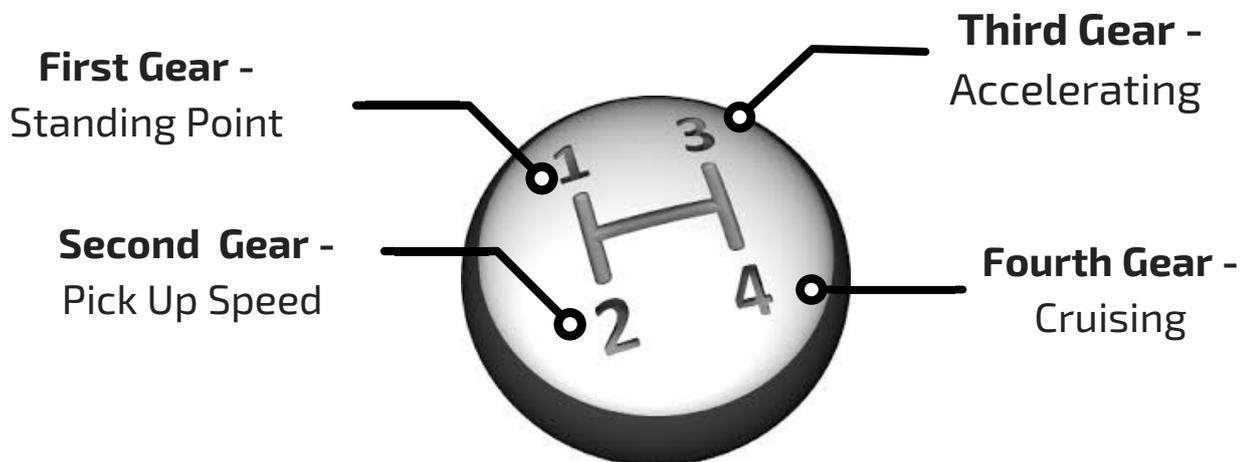
'Sell' existing centre-based provision or other services to young people not accessing these services (we see this as out-reach work) - although if young people want to gain access to services, detached youth workers have a role to facilitate this.

'Get young people off the streets'. It is easy to see detached youth work as a solution to a problem and a method for reducing the offending rates of young people by curbing or controlling their behaviour. These outcomes may occur as a result of detached youth work interventions, however detached youth workers are first and foremost informal educators- others should also see this as our primary task. We can contribute to other agendas, but it is because detached youth workers are not tasked with crime or anti-social behaviour reduction or reintegration of young people into the mainstream, that they can build relationships that have the potential to have that effect.

HOW DO WE DO IT.....

- Develop and maintain contact with young people.
- Support young people who do not access existing services.
- Provide informal opportunities for social and personal development.
- Support young people at risk.
- Recruit for specific programmes and services.
- Support young people to access other supports and appropriate services.
- Provide young people with information, advice and support.

THE GEAR STICK MODEL



FIRST GEAR- STANDING POINT

First gear is about gathering information, approaching young people on their own 'ground', accessing needs and understanding the needs of the young people you are trying to engage with. Approaching young people on the street is never easy and detached workers must take time to introduce themselves to explain what they are doing and why they are doing it. In essence a detached worker is an informal educator who enters various situations wherein the young people can express their needs, develop a working relationship, explore values and beliefs and own the process of their personal development. It is also important that workers make themselves recognisable to the community. YWI Cavan Monaghan achieves this through our visible presence on the streets in our red jackets.

PROGRAMME METHODS

- Make contact with young people by visiting streets, parks, schools, shops.
- Engage young people through use of dialogue, questionnaires, leaflets etc.
- Complete assessment of need.
- Consider using creative approaches.

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

- Enhanced understanding and development of working relationship between the young people and workers.
- Increased confidence in the young person's own ability to communicate and express their needs.
- The creation of space and comfort to discuss relevant issues.
- Agreed co-working strategy.



SECOND GEAR - PICK UP SPEED

Useful tools of engagement which aid skills already developed in the working relationship are activities. An activity can become a vehicle used for growth such as meeting in a different environment in order to share experiences or relate to an individual in a different context. At this point it will be important to introduce a basic type of contract defining behaviour and responsibilities. Residential (overnight trips away) may be introduced at this stage. Starting small with organised trips such as bowling, outdoor pursuits and possible extension to an overnight residential. It begins from where young people are at in terms of their values, attitudes, issues and ambitions and is concerned with their personal and social development. This stage should focus on the building of relationships which have been previously established between young people and staff.

PROGRAMME METHODS

- Organised trips to bowling alleys, outdoor pursuits, a neighbouring town.
- Guided tour around area organised by young people or an activity in the street such as football.
- Other activities may include use of local resources such as a park, school, a pool competition with a local youth club, late night soccer.

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

- Enhanced dialogue and relationship building – team building.
 - Development of skills in organisation and communication.
 - Opportunity to assess group's ability to cope with external issues and environments.
 - Agreed future actions between young people and detached workers.
 - Goal setting introducing change through contract, participation and ownership.
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THIRD GEAR - ACCELERATING

This gear introduces the idea of pieces of work with time bound, task oriented groups. Generally the task will dictate the type of environment, for example, youth club, resource centre or staying on the street. The group will set goals for itself requiring members to work co-operatively towards these ends while seeking to support one another and sharing ideas, knowledge and skills. Members of the group have the opportunity to be involved fully in the design, implementation and evaluation of the piece of work. The group should also be ready to engage with a fully working contract agreed with the detached workers. More connections with the community and other local organisations should be established for the development of the project.

PROGRAMME METHODS

- Group work around personal and social development, arts and drama, youth exchanges.
- Partnerships with agencies who will provide specialist information or funding/resources.
- Connections to local youth services and other community groups where the organisations may offer future development.
- Advocating on behalf of the young people with the local community and statutory or voluntary agencies.
- Working alongside young people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

- Managed change in participant's life skills and views.
 - Development of timescales with negotiated conclusion.
 - Development of group work skills e.g. communications and active listening.
 - Individual/group growth and, depending on nature of work, a product might be produced.
 - Improved tolerance and understanding of others.
 - Resolution of issues between young people and the community.
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FOURTH GEAR - CRUISING

To approach this gear, speed will have been gathered in the form of relationship building, developing skills for use in life and a high degree of participation from the individuals. From here on in the relationship with the detached youth workers changes and is used to progress the young people on in terms of their personal and social development.

Dependent on your funding and how long your detached project lasts if an exit strategy has not been designed now is the opportune time to negotiate it with the young people. For more long term detached youth work weekly engagements will continue and a high degree of participation and problem solving from young people will remain. Future peer development and specific programmes may be developed.

PROGRAMME METHODS

- Training in negotiated, identified area such as young leaders' programme, citizenship, peer education or job skills.
- Community development through active participation.
- Evaluation of the work to date. This should include all aspects of the engagement of young people.
- Exit strategy ending work to include follow-up eg referral onto local youth provider or training agency.
- Presentation of certificates or awards, if applicable.

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

- Active learning for both the young people and the detached workers.
- Increased ability to contribute to the needs of others.
- Referrals and partnerships with other local youth organisations/agencies.
- Motivation and skills to actively pursue own development.
- Improved community cohesion/integration.
- Increased capacity to take on more leadership roles.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Stage 1 - Research

- Local information - the area, recent history, previous youth work
- Trends & statistics - e.g. youth population, crime and education figures etc.
- People and agencies - Councillors, agencies, community groups, schools, Gardaí
- Facilities and services - leisure, youth, health education, voluntary

Stage 2 - Observation and Planning

- Mapping the area/location of services, facilities, housing types and layouts, waste grounds, shops and meeting places.
- Are there any young people?
- Where do young people hang out?
- Safety/risk assessment

Stage 3 - Contact with young people

- Use the gear stick model
- What do young people know about the area, what are their views, what are their interests?
- Provide information about the youth work project.
- Support and relationship building with individuals and groups.
- Recording of contacts through debriefs.

Stage 4 - Evaluation

- Measuring and reporting the outcomes and achievements.
- Record individual progression.
- Adapt and change from lessons learned.
- Finishing the project and future learning.

RECORDING INFORMATION

Detached youth workers must complete a detached debrief form after every session of work. Where possible the debrief should be retyped once you are back in an office setting. The debriefs are then printed and kept secure for evaluation purposes. The detached debrief form should include the following information:

- Names of detached youth workers on duty
- Date and time
- Location
- Description of engagements with young people
- Issues arising
- Follow up action required

Information from debriefs should be shared with line-managers during supervision and should be used as a tool to evaluate, plan and follow up on events, incidents or issues.

INTER-AGENCY OR JOINT WORKING PARTNERSHIPS

Consideration should always be given to statutory and local agencies that can assist you in delivering upon the objectives of your detached youth work and the needs of young people. Completion of the community mapping exercise should identify all the agencies in your area and particular attention should be given to those who can provide assistance when you are on duty. Where possible it is also good practice to 'check in' with the Gardaí at your nearest local Garda station to inform them when and where you will be working. Although this list is not exhaustive or definitive some potential partner agencies may include:

- An Garda Síochana - Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Tusla - Duty Social Care Worker
- Other youth agencies
- Schools
- Health services
- Family planning centres
- County Council
- Youth Officers
- Local youth & GAA clubs

EQUIPMENT & RESOURCES

All detached youth workers should be immediately identifiable to young people. It's worth noting that wearing a uniform may be off putting to some young people on the street but when you explain who you are and who you work for it will give authenticity to your role. All detached staff must have access to a Designated Liaison Person for out of hours support. Detached youth works should carry the following at all times:

- A fully charged mobile phone
- Specialist clothing - identifiable tops, jackets and wet gear etc.
- ID Card
- First Aid Kit
- Torch (try to stay in well lit areas where possible)
- Details of emergency numbers
- Detached debrief sheets
- Incident report sheets

IDENTIFICATION

Detached workers should always carry an identification card which bears a photograph of the worker and is also able to identify the organisation that they represent. These cards should be visible when working directly with young people or when in contact with other professionals or members of the public. In addition, workers should carry with them the phone number of their line manager, so that at a later point people can check the worker's validity if they wish.

LONE WORKING

Lone working is not normal practice for detached youth workers and should be discouraged. Detached workers operate in a minimum team of 2. If aiming to engage with both males and females, good practice favours a male/female team. When engaging with young people detached workers should always be in view of each other regardless if you are engaging with different groups of young people e.g. engaging with two groups on different sides of a building.

THE ROLE OF A DETACHED YOUTH WORKER

The primary focus of a detached worker's role should always be the needs, rights and responsibilities of young people. The worker is always accepting of the individual, non-judgemental, inclusive and challenging of negative or inappropriate behaviour. While we may work to promote the aims and needs of other groups and agencies in society, detached workers must always be 'on the young person's side', and such promotion must be in the interests of young people themselves.

Ultimately detached workers attempt to develop a relationship of trust where they can challenge young people's behaviour and attitudes towards themselves and others and provide opportunities to promote personal and social and educational attainment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

All youth workers must at all times be aware of their responsibilities in terms of the young people they are working with. For detached workers these responsibilities may on occasion be different from those of others. For instance a youth worker in a centre has to ensure the safety of the building where the work is taking place and can take direct measures to ensure that young people are not putting themselves at risk. On the streets the detached worker does not have the same kind of authority and may not always be able to prevent young people putting themselves in risky situations.

Nevertheless, detached workers need to be aware of all health and safety guidelines and procedures which operate throughout the organisation and operate within them. When they are involved in activities which may be undertaken by all workers e.g. residential work, trips and visits, etc., their responsibilities are no different from anyone else. Other procedures workers need to be aware of and relate to:

- Parental Consent
- Risk Assessment
- Residentials, trips and visits

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF STAFF

Detached youth work requires workers to operate in a variety of settings. But whilst staff have to be mindful of the unique nature of detached work, (i.e. going to where young people are and working on their ground), they also have to be aware of the need to not put themselves in situations of high risk. This might include, for instance, not working in a poorly lit area, derelict buildings or places where known criminal activity is taking place. A route mapping exercise should be employed to identify areas of high risk and for staff to gain an overall geographical knowledge of the area so that if necessary they can get away from situations quickly. Appropriate risk assessment procedures should always be carried out. All detached workers must comply with the organisation's health and safety policy at all times. Specifically, in the context of detached work, consideration must be given to the following:

- Workers must work in pairs or teams of three or more; no worker ever works alone and they must always be within sight of their partner when working.
- Workers must always carry their identification badges when they are on duty.
- It is good practice to inform the local police when and where we will be operating; this can be done by email by the Team Leader.
- In all but the most pressing of circumstances, it is ill-advised for all male teams to work together and mixed gender teams are preferred.
- Each pair or team must carry at least one charged mobile phone for use in emergencies and emergency phone numbers.
- Workers should be provided with suitable clothing for the cold and wet when necessary.
- Workers should not intervene in any threatening or potentially harmful situations, but withdraw from the scene, make any emergency contact they consider necessary and explain their actions to the group at a later date. Agree a code word for immediate withdrawal.
- Have an agreed exit strategy for withdrawal.
- Always observe what is going on around the group.
- Stay within contactable distance of your co-worker at all times.
- Never give out personal information (phone numbers, addresses etc.) or accept friend requests through social media.
- Beware of trespassing. Know the area you are entering.
- Always research your routes in daylight.
- Undertake risk assessments for all activities and regularly update them especially when circumstances or conditions change.

DETACHED YOUTH WORK & THE LAW

At all times detached youth workers must operate within the law and must not condone risky or illegal behaviour by young people. This will require workers explaining and negotiating with young people about when they can and can't work with them, for example, not being present when illegal activities are taking place such as smoking weed, drug dealing etc. Detached workers are obliged to contact the Gardaí if there is knowledge of a serious crime such as a serious assault. Staff must also cooperate and answer truthfully if questioned by the Gardaí about a less serious offence, e.g. a smashed window. In either instance, detached workers will not lie on behalf of young people and young people must be made aware of this. There may also be times when you have low level intelligence which you think will be useful to the Gardaí however sharing information could lead to an undermining of your relationship with the young person. It is important that you discussed this with your line manager/DLP and information must be shared with the Gardaí in confidence. The detached work team, as a whole, should keep up to date with legal reviews and it is advisable for one person to be responsible for looking out for changes. If in any doubt about how to respond to a criminal incident, a worker should seek the advice of their DLP or line manager.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Detached youth workers will encounter young people using drugs and alcohol or with young people who are under the influence of drugs and alcohol. It's up to workers to use their discretion to decide when the presence of alcohol or being under the influence of drugs in a detached youth work situation render the engagement either unproductive and/or unsafe for both young people and workers. If a young person is visibly engaging in drug use, workers should advise the young person they cannot engage with them while they are 'using' and remove themselves for the situation. A worker should not accept or participate in any way in drug usage or the consumption of alcohol as this may be construed as aiding and abetting.

Workers should also be aware that the influence of drugs or alcohol often leads to young people committing other offences. The presence of a detached worker may help to prevent the commissioning of a crime. But if activity of a criminal nature occurs, the workers should disassociate themselves from the activity and report the incident to Gardaí after discussion with the DLP or line manager. Please remember if you are present during any illegal activity which is then prosecuted you may at some future date be called as a witness. Drugs awareness training should be mandatory for all detached youth workers, in order to help them to make more informed decisions when working with young people using drugs and alcohol.



THREATENING SITUATIONS

It is not common for detached workers to find themselves in positions where their personal safety is threatened. However, there are measures that workers and managers can take to ensure threat incidents are kept to a minimum:

- Never lone work and ensure your manager knows your working times and likely geographical area.
 - Always carry a charged mobile phone along with DLP's and managers phone number.
 - Always research the area in daylight to start with and ask local people about the area.
 - Undertake risk assessments for all activities and regularly update them especially when circumstances or conditions change.
 - As part of the session evaluation and debrief it is important to reflect on what happened and ensure the learning is taken forward to the next session.
 - Walk away from situations if you, or a colleague, feel threatened.
 - Have a pre-existing or newly formed relationship with local members of An Garda Síochána who can provide advice or assistance if/when needed.
 - Staff should receive appropriate training re deescalating situations and dealing with challenging behaviour.
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WORKING IN CONFLICT

Ideally detached youth workers should attend behaviour management or diffusing a situation training as part of their induction training as the young people they meet may know nothing about them, may be suspicious or may even be engaged in unlawful activity. In some cases, the response to behaviour may be different from that in a youth centre where the centre's rules have to be adhered to. Detached workers are meeting the young people in places where there are no such rules. Nevertheless, all human beings deserve respect and this may be something the workers want to discuss with the young people as part of their work. The following issues should be considered during detached youth work:

- Being realistic when working with hard to reach or at-risk groups whose life-style may revolve around high levels of peer-pressure, aggression and/or ritualised drug use.
- Recognising that such groups are likely to not comply with agreements made in the first instance and may be tempted to challenge any responsible 'authority' from detached youth workers.
- Remain aware of your own and others health and safety, especially where unforeseen conflict occurs. Wherever possible, withdraw from situations if you feel at risk. Knowing that it is time to withdraw is a strength which may leave the team better placed to return than if the situation had escalated.
- Wherever possible, mounting conflict should be sensed and time as a team should be made available to discuss and agree how best to respond.
- Welcome the opportunity to demonstrate how conflict can be worked through without recourse to violence and aggression.
- If periods of conflict are handled well at the time, and reflected upon soon after, it should be recognised that they can serve to advance relationships, learning and awareness.
- Conflict is not something to be avoided at all cost. It is an ongoing part of many people's lives and something that young people need real situations in which to learn how to deal with it.



WORKING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Detached workers are encouraged to work with parents and guardians when this is in the interest of the young person concerned and they have given their consent to the involvement of their parents/guardians. Any project activity away from the usual meeting place of a group, or any activity involving the transportation of young people, or any planned activity involving any element of risk (even if it is delivered where the group meets), or any capture and use of young people's images (still or video), will require written consent on the organisation's standard consent form. The authorised consent of parents and guardians is required for all young people under the age of 18. Participants over the age of 18 can provide their own written consent. Where workers suspect that a parent/guardian's signature of consent has been forged or fabricated, that parent or guardian will be contacted in person or by phone to confirm their consent; young people should be told that this is the process to save any embarrassment. All consent must be received, copied and filed before any activity takes place; no advance consent, no participation. Workers must bring copies of consent forms with them during the activity in question, in case emergency contact is needed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Our detached workers will abide by the organisations Child Safeguarding Policy at all times. Young people may at times assume, given the environment, that confidentiality goes further than it actually does. Detached workers need to be very clear when explaining their limitations and boundaries to young people, that they cannot guarantee confidentiality on all issues at all times. Workers should describe the types of issues and situations that would require them to break a confidence and the kinds of action that they would be required to take in those situations. In any situation other than those prescribed in their child safeguarding policy, the right of the young person to worker confidentiality should be assumed. It is best-practice to make young people aware of the consequences of any disclosure and to seek their consent to any action taken on their behalf, even when our policy dictates that no such consent is required.

INSURANCE

All detached/project activity must be covered by appropriate insurance. It is the Manager's/Team Leader's responsibility to ensure that relevant insurance is in place in advance of any planned activity: When in doubt, workers should contact the organisations core administrative team to clarify the status of insurance and the activity plan.

TEAMWORK

Teamwork is an integral part of detached youth work with good working partnerships being the foundation for building relationships with young people. Ideally detached youth workers should be familiar with each other either having worked together previously or through team building days. Teamwork should develop to include:

- Commitment to developing an agreed and contracted team-based approach
- Ensuring adequate non-contact time and space for planning sessions, debriefings and team meetings. This time should be used effectively to plan and review the work, keep each other informed and updated, give and receive professional feedback on each other's performance and practice.
- Always working in pairs – preferably male/female to provide young people with as accessible and approachable a service as possible. Never leave your partner alone with young people.
- Consciously developing co-working skills to the point where you can instinctively read others signals and complement each other's strengths and weaknesses.
- Being aware of your own and your partner's personal safety – try to remain in visual contact with each other and ensure that at least one of you carries a mobile phone.
- Being mindful that you are a "role-model" for young people and teams should remain professional at all times.

SIGNPOSTING AND REFERRALS TO OTHER AGENCIES

To act as an effective and efficient network 'glue', detached workers should be familiar with local agencies, have introduced themselves to colleagues in those agencies and be well orientated to what is available locally for young people and who to contact. When referring a young person to another agency, it is preferred best practice for the detached worker that has facilitated the referral to go with them to the first meeting as encouragement and support.

WORKING IN COMMUNITIES AND ESTATES

Young people are an integral and important part of the life of any community and detached workers should always be prepared to help local groups and residents understand the needs of young people. Where it is in the interests of young people, detached workers should be responsive to the needs and wishes of local residents as expressed in Safe Socialising, Joint Policing Committee or resident's association meetings and look to bring young people into the decision-making process. Where there are issues of a criminal nature in a residential estate, involving young people that may be known, workers should refer residents to the Gardaí, inform residents that criminal issues are outside their working remit and we will still maintain our working relationship with young people in the area. Under no circumstances are workers to investigate the issue, either formally or informally.

DO'S AND DON'T'S OF DETACHED YOUTH WORK

While not being additional to good youth work practice, there are some do's and don't's which are particularly relevant to detached work.

DON'T...

- Raise young people's expectations by making promises you cannot keep.
- Plan to work at times and in venues where risks to your well-being are significantly increased.
- Bother young people. If they show no interest at first, try again at another time or day.
- Intervene when the Gardaí are working with young people, unless absolutely necessary i.e. if you can provide information which is relevant.
- Be seen to collude with young people if their actions or attitudes are clearly harmful or negative towards others.
- Lend young people money or give lifts in your car or purchase goods for young people.
- Give out your home address, telephone number or personal details.
- Blur the edges between working with young people and your own social life.
- Overstate your role which is not to be a trouble-shooter but someone on hand to offer skilled, informal education.
- Keep concerns about young people to yourself. Within the boundaries of confidentiality previously described, share them with an appropriate agency or line manager to work on a way forward.
- Allow young people to become dependent upon you. Empower them to move on.

DO...

- Give information about what is available from other agencies.
- Prepare and plan the aims and objectives of your project and sessions before you go out on the street.
- Ensure there is time for briefing at the beginning and debriefing and recording at the end of each session
- Record the exact times of work of the sessions on the street
- Be aware of the environment, road and lane layout of the area
- Make your project known to other agencies in the area that contact young people (e.g. Social Services, Gardaí, mental health services)
- Carry an official identity badge. When you contact young people the first time, explain who you are, who you work for and why you are there
- Ensure you have details of emergency contacts
- Work in pairs (minimum) and keep in sight of each other at all times.

SESSION CHECKLIST

Detached workers should ensure that they either follow a written or mental checklist of what's required during each phase of a detached youth work session.

BEFORE GOING OUT

- Ensure workers have the correct attire e.g. uniform, wet gear, backpack
- Ensure all necessary risk assessments have been undertaken.
- Ensure workers have essential items in case of emergency e.g. ID card, mobile phone, first aid kit etc.
- Have the necessary resources available for the session e.g. debrief forms, information leaflets.
- Discuss any specific topics which need to be mentioned during engagements with young people e.g. upcoming events for mental health week, Youth Work Ireland week, late night soccer etc.

DURING THE SESSION

- Include the local Garda Station on your walking route so you can inform them that you will be on duty that night and also the hours you will be out.
- Take time to discuss any separate engagements with young people that might have occurred and what was said/disclosed during that engagement.
- Take a food/water break as you can potentially be on your feet for several hours. During this break you can also record the first half of the night's engagements on your debrief form.

AT THE END OF THE SESSION

- All necessary recordings and evaluation procedures have been completed.
- All members of staff have had a chance to discuss their views and feelings about the session.
- Everyone knows the plans for the next session/s including what will happen and who is responsible for what.
- Any follow up pieces of work are identified and who is responsible for each piece e.g. additional information leaflets or consent forms required for next week, communication with the DLP regarding any incidents that may have occurred.
- Any necessary emergency procedures have been carried out e.g. incident report forms.



DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

The organisation has appointed designated liaison persons who act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns. The designated liaison person is also responsible for ensuring that the standard reporting procedure is followed, so that suspected cases of child neglect or abuse are referred promptly to the Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker. Detached youth workers should not only have their line manager's contact number but also the contact number for every designated liaison person in the organisation.

As detached youth work occurs during unsociable hours not every designated liaison person will be contactable when a concern arises so detached workers should always be clear who is on duty before they take to the streets. The designated liaison person can sometimes be an addition to a line manager and someone to highlight and discuss concerns that may not necessarily be a child protection issue but you still need clarification on. Any concerns that do arise should be noted in the debrief form and discussed at the earliest possible opportunity or during supervision.

SUPERVISION

Detached youth workers work in highly challenging environments and situations can change rapidly. Workers may feel under stress arising from having to deal with difficult situations or frustration at being unable to have an impact in certain circumstances. The autonomous nature of the work, often out of sight of line managers, may necessitate more frequent meetings between worker and supervisor. Time should be available during regularly scheduled supervision sessions for workers to discuss their experiences with their manager and to seek advice.

Youth Work often places staff under particular stress. In detached youth work this may arise from having to deal with particularly difficult situations or frustration at being unable to have an impact in certain circumstances. Workers should make use of what is available to them in terms of support from colleagues and supervision from their line manager. Time should be allotted at the end of a session for workers to discuss their engagements, feelings and frustrations. If a situation continues to be stressful despite the best efforts of their colleagues and the manager, and the worker's health is being affected, the option of the worker being withdrawn from a particular piece of work should be explored.



DATA CAPTURE

The capture and recording of detached data should be done as soon as possible after a detached or group session and as close to the point of delivery as is feasible. It goes without saying that detached workers are the main source of sessional data. In one evening's work, a team may work with several distinct groups of young people on one patch, or across different patches. This will mean that recording of data could happen several times during a single session. Information should always be recorded in ways which respect young people.

CODING SYSTEM

The use of a participant coding system is an effective method for protecting the confidentiality of the young people you engage with. For example John Smith becomes MN1801 (MN short for Monaghan, 18 the starting year of engagement, 01 numerical starting point). On a separate document/file each participant's name along with their unique participant code should be recorded. This document should be stored separately from debrief documents and only staff directly involved in the detached youth work project should have access to it.

Participant codes should be used on data collection forms in place of identifying information to protect participants' data when data documents are stored or out in the open. Also, in the event that a data document is lost, stolen, etc. having the data protected by a participant code will prevent anyone who may view the data from determining the young person's identity.

DATA STORAGE

All Youth Work Ireland member services should employ high standards of security in order to protect the personal data under its care and this is no different in relation to detached data. All files should be stored in a safe and secure location and only accessible by staff members who have appropriate authorisation.



MANAGING DETACHED YOUTH WORK

Those responsible for managing Detached Youth Work Projects need to acknowledge that detached youth work is most effective if it operates in an environment where the professional judgement of workers is valued and can be exercised. Given the fact that detached youth work is often misunderstood, it is essential that those tasked with managing it ensure that there is complete clarity about roles and responsibilities, as well as accountability. In addition to some of the duties of a manager, line manager or team leader that have already been mentioned throughout, there are a number of other key considerations of which detached work managers should be aware;

- Ensure that individual workers and working pairs/teams have clear and specific objectives with timescales that relate to the purposes of the project.
- Always act as a role-model for colleagues if/when working on the street
- Let workers know when, where and with whom they are expected to work. Ensure they are no issues within the chosen pairs/teams.
- Establish clear and appropriate procedures for support, supervision and performance review.
- Define individual roles in the team and make sure all colleagues know theirs and others' responsibilities
- Ensure that the organisation's written policies and procedures are fit for purpose by informing the board of management of any new developments, need to change or emergent learning that would require a policy re-write or amendment.
- Know the staff, know their motivations and personalities and try to create teams that are balanced in terms of experience, outlook and character.
- Make sure that teams are always aware of risks, how to assess them and who they need to call in an emergency situation or child protection issue.
- Train all staff to react safely when faced with hazardous situations. Listen to the training needs of detached workers and meet them in a coordinated way, seeking outside course/tutors when needed.
- Highlight and implement the policies and guidelines of the organisation.
- Liaise with the Gardaí where appropriate
- Ensure that workers know what to do when reporting incidents, assaults and protection issues.
- Ensure that adequate insurance for programmed events is in place
- Manage team resources and help core administrative staff to ensure the team has what it needs.

TRAINING

In the interests of continued safety and good practise, detached workers should be committed to undertaking as much relevant training as possible. All workers will receive child protection & specific detached induction training before they are allowed to 'walk the streets' and will then have the option to partake in all other relevant training as it arises in the yearly training calendar. Some of this training will be at the discretion of the manager and may be mandatory. Although not exhaustive, the list may include the following training:

- Personal Safety
- Dealing with conflict
- Confidentiality
- Risk Assessment
- Diversity
- First Aid
- Health and Safety
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness
- Issue Based Training including mental health and sexual health, homelessness, working with hard-to-reach groups etc.
- Designated Liaison Person

WORKING BOUNDARIES

Maintaining professional boundaries with young people is vitally important. Ideally no worker should be asked to work in their own community or with a group that includes a relative or family friend. Workers will never disclose their personal address or phone number to young people; they will always offer a work number. Detached workers need to balance the need to be open, honest and transparent with young people and to draw on their own experiences to develop group work, with the need to avoid risky personal disclosure. Workers must devise and agree their response strategy with their work partner for these situations and be clear about disclosures about sexuality, drug use, personal history, etc. There is a key difference between being friendly and being a friend; detached youth work is a profession both in the sense of its rules of conduct and the fact that it is a paid job.



AN AGREEMENT FOR DETACHED YOUTH WORK

Youth Work Ireland has adopted a charter for detached youth work which states the entitlements young people can expect from detached youth work and also what support the workers can expect. It recognises the specific areas of difficulty that detached workers experience and therefore what needs to be put in place for them to be able to work successfully and be recognised for having done so.

YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO CHOOSE TO ENGAGE, ARE ENTITLED TO WORKERS:

- who are appropriately trained, committed and accessible where/when they need them and who will be able to respond to a range of issues affecting them.
- who will promote their entitlement to 'have a voice' and be genuinely involved in decision making and democratic participation within all levels of the engagement.
- who can provide accurate and up to date information and guidance on the issues that are affecting young people's lives and signpost them to relevant agencies for specialist support. Workers can also advocate on behalf of young people, where requested, and sustain personal support throughout.
- who can maintain confidentiality within the parameters of the youth service code of conduct, law and child protection protocols and procedures. The limits of these will always be communicated to young people in a sensitive manner and consider the personal situation, identity and territorial aspects of the relationship.
- who deliver programmes of informal and non-formal educational (in the broadest sense) experiences to meet the identified and negotiated needs of young people.
- who will work in partnership with agencies to access resources and provide a range of opportunities to enhance young people's skills and knowledge and their build capacity and confidence. Through this process they will protect the integrity of the work and raise the professional contribution of the team.
- who will regularly profile the communities in which they work to identify and understand needs, avoid duplication of and/or gaps in services, and inform about changing trends and issues to improve engagement strategies.
- who value young people and their contribution regardless of their social class, gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, disability, political and/or religious beliefs.
- who are radical in their approaches in challenging risk taking behaviours in young people who already may find themselves socially excluded and disengaged with other services/appropriate role models. This process of 'considered risk' will empower young people to make informed choices and workers will support them in the choices that they make (whilst maintaining youth work professional and ethical parameters).



FROM THE ORGANISATION, DETACHED YOUTH WORKERS ARE ENTITLED TO:

- the encouragement to be inspirational, passionate, professional and enjoy their work with young people and communities.
 - appropriate supervision and support mechanisms which are meaningful, reflective and provide an opportunity to share practice and 'off load' issues.
 - exposure to their peers to share practice and direct the work of the team.
 - access to resources to provide the service to meet identified needs. This includes a range of information and advice, literature and services.
 - genuine concern and preparation for their duty of care within health and safety. This includes access to an on-call emergency Designated Liaison Person at all times of delivery, allocation of personal safety equipment and operating within a no lone working policy.
 - access to a range of professional training and continuous professional development opportunities.
 - a commitment to protecting the integrity and identity of detached youth work to funding bodies, partners, elected members and the wider community within we work.
 - acknowledgement that the work may require them to take 'considered risks' and this is accounted for in risk assessment and policy documents.
 - their work being evaluated through the impact on the process of their intervention as opposed to quantitative standards and/or performance indicators. Intrinsic to this is involvement of young people in agreeing the outcomes of the engagement.
 - a commitment from managers to dedicate the required amount of time to sustain engagement with young people in their communities until one or both parties decide it appropriate to exit the relationship.
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APPENDICES:

