

### Statement of Principles and Practice

#### Purpose

This is intended as a statement of the Association's policy on the principles of good detached youth work and as a set of practice guidelines for all new and existing detached workers employed by the Association. This statement has been created from the considered consensus of our detached working team in the context of the wider mission and values of the Association.

#### Scope

This statement relates to all street-based youth work delivered by Association staff; it is not aimed at services delivered from mobile vehicles/units, (although many of the principles expressed here are applicable to mobile work). We have divided the statement into two sections;

- Our mission, principles and values
- Our detached youth work practice guidelines

### 1 Our mission, principles and values

#### 1.1 The core mission of the Association in all of its work is;

- To continue our long history of championing good youth work, that is both rooted in tradition and progressive in outlook
- To make the provision of our services as accessible to young people as possible
- To prioritise our support for young people facing multiple needs, disadvantages and barriers
- To create opportunities and channels for young people's voices to be heard
- To support our network of Associates and other stakeholders

#### 1.2 The rights of young people

Young people have the right to gather to use the streets appropriately and sensibly in their leisure time. They have the right to challenge appropriately any decisions made by others about their lives with which they do not agree and to receive a considered explanation; it is a duty of a detached worker to facilitate this process.

Young people have a right to express an opinion in their community at area, locality and neighbourhood management groups and committees; it is always preferable that young people should be helped and prepared to express their own opinion, but where this is not possible, detached workers should act as advocates and brokers on their behalf.

Detached workers have a duty to help young people to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

#### 1.3 The role of the detached 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.

The role of the worker is to help young people to learn from their own experiences through social education; this includes helping young people to generate and create relevant experiences from which they can learn.

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. Where possible, detached workers will deliver street-level services that are appropriate and useful to young people; (these may include PA/Connexions services, condom distribution, Chlamydia testing, housing support, etc.)

Detached workers will act as inter-community or service network 'glue', linking agencies and services directly to young people and for facilitating their involvement when it is in the young person's interests to receive

such support.

#### 1.4 Voluntary engagement

All good youth work is voluntarily engaged by the young person.

Compulsion or coercion of young people's involvement and participation is both counter-productive and unethical. Detached work happens in a shared public space, where young people are uniquely positioned to have at least equal power and rights with workers.

This means that it must happen in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and respect. For this reason, detached workers must also engage voluntarily in the process; if young people are disrespectful of the role of the worker, then detached workers have the right to explain their reasons and walk away.

#### 1.5 Young people's participation and detached work

Experiential learning (or learning through doing and reflecting) is central to the youth work process. Young people, therefore, should always be helped and encouraged to participate in the planning, organization and implementation of all project work and activities.

The 'process' of participation takes priority over the 'product' of group activity; we are more concerned with individual and group learning of social awareness and skills than the material outcome of activity. That said, good detached workers will always aim to achieve positive process and product outcomes.

#### 1.6 Law and authority

The Association's detached workers will work with and alongside the Police and other authorities when it is in the interests of young people that they should do so. This will most often take the form of detached workers being 'intermediaries' between groups of young people and the Police, when it is not in the interests of young people to get themselves into trouble with the law when alternative courses of action are available.

Detached workers will work with the Police, but they will never compromise their commitment to the needs and rights of the young people they serve. It is our responsibility to have an up-to-date working knowledge of the law as it applies to detached youth work and to help the Police to understand our role, how we work and the ethics and boundaries we employ.

#### 1.7 Professionalism

'Professionalism' is not defined by payment for doing youth work, but by the quality of service delivery, the personal qualities of the workers in our team and the organisational culture of the Association as a whole. For detached workers, professionalism is defined by the knowledge of;

- The theories of youth work
- Boundaries, values and ethics
- Commitment to the needs of young people
- The need to present a public persona that is respectful and respected
- The issues (local, national and international) faced by young people
- Issue-based and service-based delivery skills
- Practical and organizational skills
- How the actions of individual workers affect the public's views of youth work more generally; being an ambassador for youth work.

#### 1.8 Working with partner agencies

We welcome and value partnership and co-ordinated work with other agencies. We will only form such working partnerships when it is clear that the aims and objectives of a partner are sympathetic and supportive of the Association's own mission and aims.

Detached workers have a duty to explain the Association's aims and mission to prospective partners and to enable them to assess the suitability of such a partnership before any work is undertaken with young people.

Our staff will never be disrespectful of other agencies or of colleagues

that work for other organisations, (either in front of young people or in any work-related environment). We will, however, always seek to give feedback and constructive criticism in a professional manner, directly to the agency/colleague concerned, especially when their performance affects young people.

### 1.9 Working in communities and neighbourhoods

Young people are an integral and important part of the life of any community or neighbourhood and detached workers should always be prepared to help other local groups and residents understand the needs of young people. In the 'intermediary' role, detached workers should become involved in the work of local democratic decision-making and planning groups and introduce themselves to residents and local businesses.

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 neighbourhood management groups and look to bring young people into the decision-making process.

### 1.10 The role of funding in detached work

The Association seeks funding that is supportive of young people's needs and will not relegate the needs of young people to funding opportunities.

We are clear in our processes of authorisation of work and funding that all of our ethical considerations have been satisfied before we accept resources from an external agency. It is a useful developmental process to encourage young people to participate in fund-raising for their own work.

When we accept funding from an external agency, we will always take a partnership approach to the work and consider the needs and objectives of the funder in our plans.

### 1.11 Quality and detached work

There is no concise or 'easy' definition of quality detached youth work.

There are a range of indicators or measurements of quality detached work that we aim to show and satisfy. Amongst them are;

- The reliability and consistency of our work
- Positive feedback from young people, communities and partners
- Evidence of development of young people from social education
- Participation of young people in all stages of the youth work process
- Positive outcomes and products of the work
- The numbers of young people benefiting from the service
- Individual impact and case studies
- Social impact and change at neighbourhood level
- Accreditations of young people's work

## 2 Our detached youth work practice guidelines

### 2.1 Definition & Purpose

#### 2.1.1 Definition

Detached youth work has been defined in a number of ways. The definition below draws on the expertise of youth workers around the country.

For our purposes;

Detached Youth Work is one way of delivering a high quality service to young people in line with the overall aims of the Youth Association.

It is youth work which takes place away from buildings, or other provision primarily intended for the use of young people, and instead happens in areas which young people might identify as their 'own ground', for instance; street corners, bus shelters, parks, cafes, shopping precincts and other places where young people choose to meet.

However, as part of a planned programme of activities, detached workers

may make use of buildings for face to face youth work sessions.

Detached youth work targets those young people who either choose not to use other youth work provision such as youth clubs and projects, or do not have easy access to such provision perhaps due to transport difficulties, lack of provision in their locality, or for some reason have been excluded from existing provision.

Detached youth work is not the same as Outreach Work. Outreach work is linked with building or project based provision, and seeks to inform young people and encourage them to use it. Detached workers do of course have a role to play in informing young people of various opportunities available to them and this often includes giving information about building based youth work and projects.

It is also not always the same as Mobile Provision which by necessity is more restricted in terms of the geographical areas it can operate in and therefore does not always take place on young people's 'own ground'.

In detached work the worker may become the sole resource as they are not able to draw on the same equipment and resources which attract young people to centres, projects or mobile provision. Removal of such 'props' (and more importantly youth workers' control over them) leads to a situation where the youth worker has to operate much more on young people's terms. In short, detached work is heavily reliant on workers and young people negotiating a positive and sustaining relationship.

#### 2.1.2 Purpose of detached work

Generally speaking, the aims of detached youth work are no different from those of other forms of youth work provision, because detached workers, just like other youth workers, aim to deliver a high quality, highly effective and informal social education service to young people. This being the case, practice guidelines need to be seen in conjunction with the Youth Association's general mission and aims listed at the start of this document.

Generally, the aims of youth workers in the Association involve making contact with young people and positively influencing their lives by engaging them in a programme of informal social education, which is fun exciting and challenging; thereby:

- Encouraging young people to broaden their understanding of issues related to Equal Opportunities and social diversity and how these affect themselves and others.
- Supporting young people in their own personal development and enabling them to develop relationships with others.
- Acknowledging young people's rights and providing opportunities for them to understand and exercise those rights.
- Encouraging young people to be active participants in their communities.
- Enabling young people to gain knowledge and increase their understanding of issues that effect the environment.
- Encouraging and supporting young people to explore and access life-enhancing opportunities.
- Encouraging young people to lead healthy lifestyles.

#### In summary

Detached work in the Youth Association is a method of youth work delivery, which enables workers to progress towards the aims of the Association, in places where young people choose to meet, away from traditional youth work venues.

### 2.2 Process of Detached Work

As with all forms of Youth work practice, workers will need to go through a series of stages in developing a piece of work, to ensure that it is effective and of a high standard. In terms of detached work in the Association, there are 6 stages through which a piece of work should progress.

### 2.2.1 Stage 1 – Preliminary work

A number of preliminary measures should be taken before detached youth workers go out to work with young people:

#### Needs analysis

Identify the young people workers aim to work with and be clear about why they are a target group. Look at the needs of young people and those of the local community as a whole. Make sure that the work doesn't duplicate what other people are already doing.

This will involve agreement with the Team Leader and Department Manager and will take account of the area profile and project delivery plan.

#### Planning

Set clear and initial objectives and know how these link to the overall aims of the Association. If a project Charter has been created for detached work, make sure that delivery plans are based on it. Be clear about how aims, objectives and targets are linked and how these will help the Association meet its required outcomes.

Aims and objectives should be: "SMART" i.e. Specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, and time limited. Identify necessary resources and schedule times and methods for recording, monitoring and evaluating work. Raise awareness amongst local agencies and youth workers about the planned work.

#### Knowing the team

Identify the skills the team needs: identify strengths and weaknesses and subsequent training needs within the team. Acknowledge personal limitations. Discuss individual interests and priorities.

#### Support and Supervision

Establish regular Small Team meetings and individual supervision sessions.

Ensure that time is available at the start and end of each session for workers to share information. Ensure workers have emergency phone contact numbers and know what to do in the event of an emergency situation. Make sure staff have relevant I.D. cards and know to carry these at all times.

Ensure staff are aware of relevant Health and Safety, and other policy guidelines.

#### Administration and Finance

Know what resources are available and plan the acquisition of any extra resources that will be needed. Make sure that administrative staff know all they

need to know to help the project succeed.

### 2.2.2 Stage 2 - Reconnaissance

Workers should take time to get to know the patch. This will include identifying and liaising with others who are working in the same area (other agencies, community groups, residents, and other youth service provision), identifying potential target groups of young people although not necessarily making contact at this stage and looking at other aspects of the local community which will impact on young people's lives.

A brief and simple community profile is a useful approach at this stage and a profiling checklist can be found at Appendix A

At this stage workers will need to consider the following:

#### The amount of time spent on reconnaissance

There may be a temptation for youth workers to want to get on with direct work with young people but it is important to remember that getting to know the area thoroughly now will benefit the work with young people later.

On the other hand a lack of planning at this stage may lead to more time than necessary being spent on reconnaissance and a duplication

of work. The team therefore should identify what needs to be achieved from reconnaissance, who will be responsible for different aspects of the work during this period, and set a realistic time i.e. not too long or short a period. In the context of much medium-term funded work, it is unlikely that the reconnaissance period will extend beyond two weeks, so the careful planning of this stage is important to save time and effort later.

#### Health and Safety issues

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.

The reconnaissance is to be used to identify areas of high risk and for staff to gain an overall geographical knowledge of the patch so that if necessary they can get away from situations quickly. *Appropriate Risk assessment procedures should always be carried out.*

#### Who to get to know

Understandably the presence of youth workers talking to young people on the streets can arouse suspicion. As part of the reconnaissance period, workers are advised to introduce themselves to relevant adults in the areas where they plan to work.

This might include shopkeepers, community groups, leisure centre staff, local police, other youth workers, pub landlords/ladies, school staff etc.

Workers will need to explain who they are, that they are employed by the Association, their expected times of working etc. Networking like this not only helps to avoid confusion later, but it also helps youth workers to get to know what else exists for young people in the area, and where they might expect to get support when they begin to work directly with young people.

#### Potential contact points

Workers should use the reconnaissance stage to identify places where young people choose to meet, times that they are there, how other factors (for example the weather) can affect arrangements, characteristics of different groups (e.g. age, gender etc.) At this stage, workers will consider whether it is appropriate to begin to publicise their forthcoming presence in an area.

### 2.2.3 Stage 3 – Making contact

This involves the first approach to a group of young people, early conversations and the first stages of establishing relationships.

*"...contact making is likely to be a gradual process. It may begin with observation, which develops into eye contact, then to a nod which after a number of greeting becomes a conversation. All that happens up until that conversation is just as important as the conversation itself.....This low-key approach can often mean that it is a young person who makes the approach rather than the worker."*

(Allan Rogers – Starting Out in detached Work, NAYC Publications)

We need to be mindful, however, of the timescales set in our delivery plan; sometimes we will need to instigate contact if groups are slow to respond to our presence.

At this stage workers will need to consider the following:

#### Their own feelings, fears and anxieties

Detached work takes place on young people's own ground and therefore often takes place without the "props" that other kind of youth workers use. This may leave workers feeling vulnerable when contacting a group for the first time. It will help workers to plan how they are going to approach a group and that they are going to say.

Workers should be prepared to say who they are and what they are doing, ('we're youth workers who work away from youth centres') and also be prepared to discuss what they can and cannot offer.

### The potential for young people to feel anxious or mistrusting

Workers should remember that young people probably feel more vulnerable than them. Usually, when young people are approached by adults they don't know, whether or not it is for negative reasons (being told to move on, being told to keep the noise down etc).

Consequently, workers should be prepared for situations where they are not automatically welcomed by a group.

### What to take on to the streets

There are a number of items which workers can carry with them which not only 'break the ice' but also help to show what youth workers can offer to young people. These might include flasks of hot drinks, leaflets, games, etc.

### Who it is appropriate to work with

Although the reconnaissance should have identified potential target groups, workers will need to review the situation even at this early stage. It may not always be appropriate for the first group of young people that is contacted to become part of a longer term strategy.

It is also important for a target group to be allowed to reject outright approaches by detached workers and staff will need to be sensitive to their wishes. Workers will also need to be aware of working within boundaries in terms of the age of young people and whether they are part of agreed target groups. Other considerations might include whether the young people in the group are all of the same gender, or the activities that the group are involved in, for example, alcohol/drug misuse etc.

### Use of identity cards

Workers should carry identity cards which they can produce when working directly with young people or when in contact with other professionals or members of the public. Identity cards are issued by the Association and include a photograph of the worker. 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.

### Introducing ourselves

At the first meeting with a new group, our detached workers should try to:

- Give their names
- Say they work for the Association
- Say they are detached youth workers
- Show their identification
- Describe what detached work is
- State their commitment to young people
- Be open to any questions
- Introduce the idea of boundaries and confidentiality

### 2.2.4 Stage 4 – Engagement and intervention

It has already been said that detached work involves delivering on the aims of the Association in settings away from buildings and projects and on young people's territory. It is at the stage of engagement and intervention that this delivery takes place.

The Association's detached youth workers aim to intervene in the lives of young people and offer a challenging programme of informal social education. Just like other youth workers they use important influences on young people's lives to stimulate discussion and involve them in a variety of activities.

So for instance, both detached workers and workers in youth clubs may use recent news stories or television programmes to raise issues with young people which affect their lives. Similarly, both may go on to use a variety of methods to encourage young people to express their views on issues e.g. video, drama, art, music, etc.

Detached youth workers need to utilise a range of skills to deliver

the work and communicate with young people in a meaningful and imaginative way. In this they are no different from any other youth workers. The major differences between detached workers and other workers focus on:

- the setting for the work – young people's own ground.
- resources – detached workers cannot draw on the same range of resources as other workers.
- time taken to establish and develop relationships – the nature of detached work may mean it takes longer for workers to establish relationships with young people. This can be counteracted by working with the group more intensively and frequently than is usual in centre-based work.

Detached workers need to be aware of the unpredictable environment in which that may work and the distractions this can cause, for example, working outside a pub where a fight may break out.

### Some important considerations:

#### Encouraging engagement

It is the job of a detached worker to engage groups of young people in some shared and valued project work that the group is interested in bringing to fruition and that will lead to some identified learning outcome for the young people involved. It goes without saying that the workers will always be positive, enthusiastic, committed and deliver on their promises. The main aim of the work will always be to encourage groups of young people to take control of their own work.

#### Working boundaries

Maintaining professional boundaries with young people is vitally important. No worker should be asked to work in their own neighbourhood 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 (what we call being 'genuine'), 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.

#### Project work

Project work is a necessary part of all long-term work with groups of young people. Detached workers should always be looking to generate opportunities for developing project work with groups. Other than the very early stages of a relationship with a new group, just chatting and 'being there' is not enough. The need to involve young people in the active participation in designing and organizing the project is never a reason to neglect planning and preparation.

Detached workers need to be more prepared and spend more time planning project work than their building-based colleagues, because of the length of time it can take to complete some tasks with some groups in a street environment.

#### Information, advice and guidance

Good youth workers have always provided the kinds of services that some Connexions staff mistakenly think they invented. It is part and parcel of being young person centred and being professional. It is our duty to stay well-informed and to be able to provide basic information on a range of issues that routinely matter to young people. Where more support is needed, detached workers should be able and prepared to introduce young people to other specialists and service providers who can meet their needs, in the same way that a generalist Personal Adviser would.

### Signposting and referrals to other agencies

To act as effective and efficient network 'glue', detached workers should always 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.

### Maintaining contact and being available

Workers should be clear about meeting days, times and places and try to establish a routine with the group as soon as possible. If, for some unavoidable reason, workers cannot keep a meeting with a group, they should try to pass on a message to one or more group members; mobile phones or agreed 'drop zones' for messages are useful for this purpose.

No worker should promise to be available outside their contracted working time; it is a promise that cannot be kept and young people should not have to rely on an out-of-hours response in an emergency situation. A work mobile phone number, or landline voicemail box is sufficient as a means of leaving messages and texts that a worker can respond to as soon as they are back on duty.

All of our detached teams have a building base for administration and office-based work. If these are to be open to young people to 'drop in', it must be clear as to the days and times when a visit will be possible and welcomed by the staff and all colleagues must agree to the timetable. Remember, not all buildings are suitable for work with young people.

### Confidentiality

Our detached workers will abide by the Association's confidentiality policy at all times. We need to be very clear when we are explaining our limitations and boundaries to young people, that we 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 our confidentiality and safeguarding policies, 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.

### Working with parents and guardians

The Association encourages detached workers 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.

### Gaining consent

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 Association'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.

### Use of technology

The Association has pioneered the use of many types of new technology in detached work settings and this will continue to be an important part of our work. Detached workers and their managers should stay updated and aware of emerging technologies and be creative in their approaches to how they could be used in detached work.

### Accreditation

The Association is an award centre for the Open College Network (OCN). It is the policy of the Association that young people should be offered the opportunity to achieve accreditation for any work that they do that can be accredited by OCN. It is the responsibility of detached workers to map project plans to OCN accreditation units wherever possible.

### 2.2.5 Stage 5 – Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is about continually collecting information about the work over a period of time which is relevant to aims and objectives.

Evaluation is about making an informed judgement based on collected information about the value of the work, measured against aims and objectives. It involves asking 'Have we done what we set out to do and have we met the aims of the project?' Sometimes, evaluation will be carried out by external agencies (such as researchers or funders) and at other times evaluation will be done by Association staff.

### Monitoring

It is arguably more important for detached workers to monitor their work thoroughly than any other group of youth workers. Often, those unfamiliar with the concept of detached work are sceptical about its outcomes and impacts; this means the collection of conclusive information about the achievements of the work is vital for the future of detached work support. Not surprisingly, there are a range of performance indicators for which data must be collected. These are;

#### General quality indicators from our guidelines:

- The reliability and consistency of our work
- Positive feedback from young people, communities and partners
- Evidence of development of young people from social education
- Participation of young people in all stages of the youth work process
- Positive outcomes and products of the work
- The numbers of young people benefiting from the service
- Individual impact and case studies
- Social impact and change at neighbourhood level
- Accreditations of young people's work

#### Specific monitoring requirements:

- Young people's gender and ethnicity
- Numbers of young people misusing drugs and/or alcohol
- Numbers of young people involved in crime or ASB
- Specific establishment of community links and contacts
- Specific establishment of links and contacts with funders
- Number and nature of positive destinations achieved by participants
- 'Soft outcomes', or indicators of any positive distance travelled by participants as a result of participating
- Numbers of young people signposted to other agencies

#### Programme-related quality indicators:

- Number of young people taking part in activity programmes
- Number of young people taking part in residentials
- Number of programmes; art, sport, music, drugs awareness, sexual health, etc.

- Number of residentials
- Number of films made
- Number and level of qualifications and accreditations achieved
- Young people's engagement in decision-making
- Published research, disseminated learning and external written evaluations

### Monitoring systems

#### Data capture

The capture and recording of sessional data should be done as soon as possible after a group work 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 may happen several times during a single session. Use of paper-based systems on the street is impractical; weather and the lack of light and tables mean that pen and paper are of limited value. Most sessional statistical information should be texted to a central administrative contact for preparation later. To keep texts short and fast, a series of agreed shorthand references for gender, ethnicity and location should be established for the whole team. With practice, these can be sent during a group work session without any interruption to the work.

The detail of sessional work, including reflections and outcomes, should be recorded as voice files and texted to central administration for later conversion to written records. Additionally, a dedicated voicemail box will be assigned to the collection of sessional recordings. All audio or video recordings of groups and digital photographs should be uploaded to the central server by the team responsible for their capture (with the guidance and support of the administrator) and filed and tagged with time and place details.

#### Data preparation

Information should be recorded in ways which respect young people. Only write what you would be happy for a young person to read. You should inform young people that information about them will be held on computer and explain why and how it will be used, including any guarantees of anonymity that young people may require. Senior management must provide clear policies for the handling of potentially sensitive information.

Data management is a specialist and skilled job in its own right. The success of any complex information management system will depend on the input of the most appropriate colleagues in preparing and assembling data in the most useful ways and storing it in the most accessible locations.

Our team administrator will have the task of converting texts, audio files and voicemails into typed records and ensuring that videos and photographs are also stored in the right places for later use. Workers can help administrators by being clear about where photographs and videos were taken and to which group they belong.

#### File storage, retrieval and sharing

As explained, our administrators will ensure that all files are stored in the right place on our shared server. This will mean that all project staff and senior management will have permanent access to recordings. It is the role of the Team Leader to routinely retrieve and analyse recordings from teams to produce useful information; colleagues have a responsibility to point out any notable learning points that they have gathered as part of their reflections.

The range and depth of information produced will correspond with the project Charter and planning and be agreed with the Department Manager. All prepared information will similarly be stored on the shared server and be available to project staff and senior management.

#### Reflection and use of information

We aim to create learning from our monitoring. This is the process that

links operational monitoring to the later stage of evaluation. Individual workers, working pairs, small teams, department and Association-wide workshops are all appropriate levels of focus to reflect on the information we have, create ideas for service improvement and generate discussion for individual personal development. It goes without saying that Small Team meetings and supervision should focus on information gathered from monitoring.

To help the sharing and discussion process, information for meetings and supervisions should be prepared and available in advance, in order to give everyone the chance to fully understand the issues that are emerging.

#### Feedback

Gaining young people's feedback regularly and routinely is an integral part of the Association's approach to detached work. Feedback can be captured in writing, but it is more practical to make audio and video recordings of young people's opinions on our service; (no consent is required for an internally used recording).

Feedback should be sought for two criteria. The first is 'excellence in experience'; (how much young people have enjoyed the session/project). The second is 'fitness for purpose'; (how well the project/session has achieved or delivered what we said it would). Of course, young people should always be asked for their ideas on how we could change or improve the service we provide.

Detached workers should carry the Association's complaint form and make them available should young people wish to make a complaint; all complaints must be passed on to a member of the Senior Management Team and young people must receive a considered response to their complaint. All feedback should be discussed and analysed by the whole detached team and a summary of feedback discussed at Small Team meetings.

#### Quality assurance and reference groups

As noted, we seek and record young people's feedback at every available opportunity. As part of our quality assurance method and in line with our strategy to remain accountable to young people for the service offer we make, all projects should develop reference groups of young people with whom they can share monitoring information and seek ideas as to how the service should change and improve as a response.

#### Reporting

All staff may be involved in reporting to colleagues and external agencies from time to time. The quality of how we represent our work is an important consideration for the Association. Teams should be encouraged by senior managers to use a 'house style' of reporting that meets our needs and those of our partners.

#### Evaluation

At key points in the project cycle, we will evaluate our work and provide a clear statement of accountability to the aims and objectives we have set. This could be done as a routine part of the cycle of project management, (such as quarterly reports to funders), as annual or bi-annual reviews of progress or as ad hoc publications of learning that may be of use or interest to others in our field.

Remember, we have a professional duty to help colleagues in the wider youth work field learn from our experiences, (both successes and failures), so that future work for and with young people will better serve their needs. External evaluation

Many of our projects and programmes have a commitment to external evaluation, often by researchers and colleagues in the academic youth work field. External evaluation should be arranged and clearly planned from the earliest possible stage. This will help to ensure that the methods and focus of monitoring and recording will be built in to our detached work from the outset. It will also emphasise the key aims and objectives of the project to the staff who will deliver it.

### Dissemination

The Association's stakeholders all value our reputation. To enhance that reputation we need to disseminate our findings and learning to the wider world from time to time. We must pay careful attention to the way we disseminate our learning to ensure that;

- We make the most of what we have learned
- We genuinely have something innovative or important to share
- We have close control of the style and quality of the publication or product that we share with others

Usually, the job of preparing products and publications for dissemination will be taken on by specialists (either in-house or external). Workers should be prepared to help in any way they can to enable our media managers to make the most of what we have to say.

### 2.2.6 Stage 6 – Project exit and moving on

Sometimes, workers can find it difficult to close a piece of work and move on from a patch or group. This difficulty can be minimised by recognising the role of the work from the outset and planning the exit. Closing work and moving on is a necessary part of the process and enables us to begin with new groups and challenges.

### Planned exit

The closing of a programme of detached work with a group results from one or more of three situations;

- A group has gained all it can from the experience and little or nothing new is being gained from continuing the contact
- It is an integral part of the project plan that workers will only spend a finite amount of time with a group or on a patch, before moving elsewhere
- Funding for the work has ended or moved and there are no resources to support continuation.

The first situation will inevitably be faced by all detached workers at some point in their careers. The latter two situations (although resulting from different causes) can be managed in the same way. In all cases, it is the responsibility of the workers to ensure that young people are properly informed as to the time scales and purpose of the work and that the expectations of what can be achieved are realistic.

Detached workers are in the odd position of creating relationships that they plan to end from the very beginning. Disruption and a sense of loss can result from misleading groups of young people that the process will not end at some predetermined point in the future, (be that based on time or experience).

### Recognising the end

Good and routine monitoring, linked to clear planning and objectives will provide the best guide to the need to close down a group. When we have achieved our intended outcomes, there is no more to do, other than re-negotiate and plan for a different set of outcomes with the same group. Often, this is not possible and it is only right that other young people should have the opportunity to experience good detached youth work.

As part of colleagues' reflections on sessions, evaluations, Small Team discussions and supervisions, it should become increasingly apparent that the point of exit is approaching. This recognition should be accompanied by a plan to set an exit date and to inform the group that things will change and end.

Encourage groups to reflect on what they have learned and achieved and to plan a celebration event as part of group closure. Do not underestimate the emotional effect that closure can have on detached workers and use supervision as a discussion platform and channel for your emotions.

When a piece of group work was time limited from the outset, it is even more important to keep young people informed of timescales, progress and closure plans. Time-limited work can be very productive and just as emotional at the exit point. Reflect and celebrate with your group. Learn

and move on.

Occasionally, some group members will need ongoing support and intervention for issues that have emerged from the work. It is the worker's responsibility to make sure that safe and supported referrals are made to other network colleagues within the timescales allowed by planned exit.

### 2.3 Managing detached work

In addition to some of the duties of a manager or Team Leader that have already been described, 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 when working on the street
- Let workers know when, where and with whom they are expected to work.
- Establish clear and appropriate procedures for support, supervision and performance review
- Define individual roles in the team and make sure all colleagues know their and others' responsibilities
- Ensure that the Association's written policies and procedures are fit for purpose by informing senior 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 and how to assess them
- Train all staff to react safely when faced with hazardous situations
- Stress and implement the policies and guidelines
- Take control of the logging on/off process for workers
- Liaise with the Police 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
- Take note of any training needs and make sure we meet them in a coordinated way

### 2.4 Health and safety

**2.4.1 All detached workers must comply with the Association'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 Association 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
- All workers will have undergone a CRB disclosure check carried out by the Association
- 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, blog page address, etc.)
- Beware of trespassing. Know your patch.
- Avoid going into young people's houses without having prepared for this with your line manager
- Teams will 'check in and check out' at the beginning and end of their working sessions with a line manager or named responsibility holder. This will most often be done by text or message
- Always research your routes in daylight.
- Undertake risk assessments for all activities and regularly update them especially when circumstances or conditions change

### 2.4.2 Work related stress

Youth work may place staff under particular stress; this may arise from having to deal with difficult situations or frustration at being unable to have an impact in certain circumstances.

It is important that workers make use of what is available to them in terms of support from colleagues and supervision from their line manager. Space should be available if necessary at the end of a session for workers to discuss their feelings and frustrations. Time should also be available during regularly scheduled supervision sessions for workers to discuss their experiences with their line manager and seek advice.

If a situation continues to be stressful despite the best efforts of the worker their colleagues and the manager, and a worker's health is being affected, then the option of the worker being withdrawn from particular piece of work needs to be explored.

The Association takes its responsibilities towards its staff very seriously and supervisors are advised to keep senior management informed of any reports of worker difficulty or stress, even if they seem relatively minor.

### 2.4.3 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 Association 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

Workers who are unsure about these or any other procedures must contact their line manager in the first instance.

### 2.4.4 Alcohol and drugs

The Association's detached youth workers will work with young people using drugs and alcohol or with young people who are under the influence of drugs and alcohol. The workers will use their discretion to decide when the presence of drugs and alcohol in the youth work situation render the session either unproductive and/or unsafe for both young people and workers.

We recognise that much good youth work can be delivered by agreeing to work with young people using drugs recreationally.

Young people will not be able to use drugs or alcohol during any activity organized with the Association; this applies at all times during residential work. It is considered as an act of gross misconduct subject to instant dismissal for employees of the Association to use alcohol or drugs in work time or to smoke tobacco in the presence of young people.

We aim to maintain the drugs awareness training of all detached youth workers, in order to help them to make more informed decisions when working with young people using drugs and alcohol.

### 2.4.5 Insurance

All project activity must be covered by appropriate insurance. It is the 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 Association's core administrative team to clarify the status of insurance and the activity plan.

### 2.5 Legal issues

Detached workers must not condone risky or illegal behaviour by young people, even if they are unable to prevent it. This may require workers explaining and negotiating with young people about when they can and can't work with them.

This will include, for example, not being present when illegal activities are taking place, (drug dealing, etc.)

At all times youth workers must operate within the law. This may mean on occasion being obliged to contact the police if they have knowledge of a serious crime, (e.g. serious assault), whereas at other times they may be required to answer truthfully if questioned by the police about a less serious offence, (e.g. a smashed window).

In either instance youth workers will not lie on behalf of young people and young people must be made aware of this.

Examples:

#### Alcohol

Detached youth workers will frequently encounter young people consuming alcohol on a public place. If they are under 18, they will be committing an offence, and certain areas have restrictions on people over 18. A detached worker should not accept or participate in anyway in the consumption of alcohol as this may be construed as aiding and abetting. Workers should also be aware that the influence of alcohol often leads to young people committing other offences. The presence of a detached worker may help to prevent the commission of crime. But if activity of a criminal nature occurs, the workers should disassociate themselves from the activity and decide whether or not to report the incident. A point to remember is that if you are present you may at some future date be called as a witness. Selling to or purchasing alcohol for those under 18 is an offence.

#### Theft

The intention to deprive someone permanently of his or her property is an offence. 'Property' may range from a bag of crisps to articles of significant value. A person caught shop-lifting even a low value item is likely to be prosecuted. As a worker, you have to weigh your knowledge of the young person, your relationship with them and the seriousness of the offence. If the theft is of high value and they are known to be persistent offenders, they may be better helped by reporting them so that they can receive



intervention from the youth justice system. If you have previously had a confidentiality understanding with a young person and they start to tell you about an offence, you should immediately tell them that if they continue you might have to report the incident.

### Drugs

Cannabis is a class B drug, and possession or supplying it is an offence. For a first offence of possession, a young person may receive a warning, but persistent offending is likely to result in a criminal prosecution. Supplying any controlled drug is a serious crime.

### Anti-Social behaviour

An Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) is usually made after persistent offending of a particular kind with the intention of preventing further offences. The breach of an ASBO is a serious offence (as is the breaching of any court order). A minor or unintentional breach is likely to result in a low level of punishment. However, the commission of further offences of a criminal nature themselves will be treated seriously.

There is no legal requirement upon any member of public to report the

breach of an ASBO. However, some people who may have been the victim of persistent offending or who feel that they have a common duty to do so, may report the breach to the police.

### Disorderly Behaviour

The use of threatening or abusive language and being drunk and disorderly are offences. They are more serious if racially or religiously aggravated.

### Assault

Common assault resulting in minimal injury with no lasting marks or bruising is of low level seriousness. Assault resulting in actual bodily harm (ABH) or grievous bodily harm (GBH) is very serious.

### Note:

**This information is intended for guidance only and does not have any legal status. If in doubt about how to respond to a criminal incident, a worker should seek the advice of their line manager or their emergency contact within the Association.**

### Appendix A

#### Community/Patch Profiling Checklist

Useful things to know or find out about a new patch before you start work:

- Bus routes, numbers and times
- Nearest police station and phone number
- Named Community Police Officer
- Job Centre or Connexions Centre address, phone and opening times
- Named Community-based PAs
- Housing access point
- Duty chemists including those in emergency contraception schemes
- Post offices
- YOT, Social Services & Social Care direct phone numbers
- Doctors' surgeries, Health Centres and hospitals
- The nearest A&E Department
- Any needle exchanges
- Schools
- Libraries
- Youth centres and projects
- Young people's leisure facilities (skate parks, amusements, etc.)
- Shops
- Rain shelters
- Phone boxes
- Parks and youth shelters
- Areas of high graffiti
- Other professionals based in the patch
- Unsafe, unlit or derelict areas
- Churches, mosques and synagogues
- Big local employers
- Pubs and clubs
- Names of Councillors and MP
- Neighbourhood Management Group Meeting minutes
- ASB statistics and details of residents' complaints
- Recent local press coverage of young people's issues
- NEET statistics and 'hotspots'

Many of these things can be found by internet searches and walking the patch. Keep a clear file of the information you find and add to it as your work and knowledge progress. Blow-up a local street map on a photocopier and mark your information on it. When you have finished with your profile, pass it on to colleagues at head office for future use or archiving.

### Appendix B

#### Confidentiality Decision Tree

(Thanks to Cumnock and Doon Youth Information Project)

A checklist of questions to ask when issues of young people and confidentiality arise:

In order for staff to deal with particularly sensitive issues regarding child abuse, the following checklist should be used when the Confidentiality Policy comes in to practice:

- 1 Do I have a legal duty to pass on any information?
- 2 a. Do I have a professional duty to pass on information?  
b. Do I have any discretion in this matter?  
c. How can I get advice and support in cases of doubt?
- 3 Do I have an obligation to respect the confidence of the person who gave me the information?
- 4 If I feel that it would be in the young person's best interests to pass on the information:
  - a. Can I get the young person's agreement to do so?
  - b. If not, is it so important that I should breach confidentiality?
  - c. What support can I get to help me to decide whether to breach confidentiality?
  - d. What will the consequences be for:
    - \* the young person?
    - \* the young person's relationship with me as an advisor?
    - \* the young person's trust in adults in general?
- 5 If, having taken all relevant information into account, I decide to breach confidentiality, how do I tell the young person?  
What support can I get for the young person?

### Appendix C

#### Detached Worker Work Bag

It is suggested that organisations should issue workers with a street bag and the following are items to be considered for inclusion:

#### Essential

• Information leaflets (on what is relevant to the area) We would suggest that you also carry information leaflets on the project / organisation.

- Pens
- Note pad
- Disposable gloves
- Torch
- Street map
- Mobile phone
- Emergency phone numbers
- Project ID card

#### Advisable after training

- Needle exchange box
- Condoms

#### Discretionary

- Pair of pants
- Sanitary towels
- Freshen up pads
- Phone card
- Personal security alarm
- Flask
- Games

### Appendix D

#### Training for Workers

The following are key areas of training for Detached Youth Workers:

- Health and Safety (including personal safety)
- Dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour
- Sexual health
- Working with co-workers
- Children Act
- Welfare rights
- Drugs
- Mental Health
- Group-work skills
- Child protection
- Sexual abuse
- Team work skills
- Computer and Internet
- Co-working