



Cumbria Youth Support Services

Youth Work Curriculum

**February 2006
(Revised August 2008)**

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Forward

This is our first ever Youth Work Curriculum. It marks a big step forward for the Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership (now Cumbria Youth Support Services) who have a unique role to play in making a positive contribution to the outcomes for young people. It provides an educational framework to support and guide the many youth workers committed to helping young people enjoy life and actively participate in their communities.

This Curriculum is launched at a time when there are many exciting changes and developments in youth work nationally, and to the provision of Children's Services. Youth work skills are being widely recognised as having an impact on young people lives.

Good youth work provides learning opportunities that challenge, inspire and capture the imagination of young people. The development of personal and social skills, healthy relationships, respect for oneself and others, and valuing our diverse society are all encouraged in the curriculum. It places the needs of the young person at its core and gives the youth worker the tools to implement the most appropriate interventions. It must be considered as a 'fluid' document as it develops in response to external influences and the changing needs of our young people.

Our primary focus for 2006 is to continue supporting young people at critical stages in their lives when good choices and self-belief can make a difference.

I believe that this curriculum document provides us with a clear framework to assist the Partnership in its work. I hope that you find it useful and informative.

Duncan Graham

Duncan Graham C.B.E. M.A.
Independent Chairman
Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership
(now Cumbria Youth Support Services)

1.2 Purpose of the curriculum

The purpose of the curriculum is to give

- a clear policy statement about how to use our youth work curriculum to inform our work with young people and help us to meet our organisational aims;
- clear guidance on how to translate Youth Service policy into effective and measurable practice;
- through a range of curriculum toolkits, examples of good practice and practical ideas for high quality youth work.

1.3 How to use the curriculum document

The document has been divided into seven main sections:

- Introduction
- The Core Values and Principles that underpin the Cumbria Youth Support Services Youth Work Curriculum
- Cumbria Youth Support Services Youth Work Curriculum
- Curriculum Content
- Curriculum Process
- Principles into practice
- Acknowledgements
- Appendices

In addition to this document the service is in the process of developing a range of youth worker toolkits, which focus on planning, evaluating, recording and accrediting youth work practice in Cumbria

2.0 The core values and principles that underpin the Cumbria Youth Support Services youth work curriculum

2.1 Cumbria Youth Support Services (CYSS) – Vision

To enable and empower every young person in Cumbria to meet their full potential during their transition to adulthood by providing access to high quality, effective leisure-time activities and support.

Cumbria IYSS service aims to ensure that

- All young people will have access to a diverse and attractive local offer of purposeful, engaging and exciting positive activities and places to go. This will be responsive to their needs and support their personal education and social development, including providing routes into more dedicated support and guidance for those who need it
- Disadvantage will no longer be a barrier to accessing local opportunities. Activities will be popular with young people from a wide range of different backgrounds, faiths and ethnicities, actively bringing them together.
- Parents will be fully informed about the available opportunities and how to access these and be confident in their ability to support teenagers' personal education and social development.
- Communities will play their part in providing opportunities and support for young people, building stronger and more trusting relationships across generations.

Principles of the vision:

- To ensure young people are actively involved
- To provide high quality and accessible facilities
- To provide targeted services (TYS) within the context of universal services
- To respect and safeguard young people
- To promote and provide positive and challenging activities
- To provide independent and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance
- To value diversity and actively promote equality of opportunity
- To improve outcomes for young people
- To give young people and communities real influence
- To attract and engage with every young person
- To have effective services delivered by a skilled workforce

2.2 Cumbria Youth Support Services – Mission

Through integrated working CYSS will achieve the mission of the Children's Trust and:

- Create opportunities for young people, their families and those working with them, to be actively involved in developing and participating in services
- Find new ways of working and sharing available resources to meet the needs of young people and their families
- Provide a high quality experience that inspires every young person to achieve their full potential in life, in work and as a member of their community
- Invest in a highly skilled and integrated workforce to deliver the expectations of young people and their families
- Commission services to secure improved outcomes, through evidence based practice, for all young people and their families.
(Source: Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2010)

CYSS contributes to creating a society where all young people develop and progress, fulfilling their potential and making a positive contribution to their communities. To achieve this we need to advance consistently with the 'Youth Matters' strategy based on the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, building on existing good practice. This requires a step change in how we support young people, and help them to develop during their teenage years and into young adulthood, through comprehensive youth offer.

Adolescence is an exciting time of life, with new opportunities and significant change. During the transition to adulthood, Cumbria IYSS will ensure that every young person will be entitled to, and be able to shape:

- Positive leisure-time activities and facilities
- Personal, social and educational development opportunities;
- Impartial information, advice, guidance and counselling
- Help to take responsibility for their own health

With, where necessary, targeted support so young people achieve and progress.

2.3 Our core values for young people

The 'Values' that underpin our 'Vision' and 'Mission' derive from a clear understanding of and commitment to, learning and development, equality of opportunity, social inclusion and the educational and social importance of choice, freedom, responsibility and justice.

Our 'Values' are further informed and underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child and the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act (1998).

Equality of opportunity: We will positively challenge prejudiced attitudes, values, and beliefs and celebrate diverse communities

Education: We will provide opportunities for learning and personal development in a variety of accessible places

Participation: We will offer young people a real voice and we will listen carefully to what they have to say and use their views to shape our service

Empowerment: We will enable young people to gain the skills and understanding required to make positive choices, take control of their lives and influence wider arenas

2.4 Our statement of purpose for work with young people

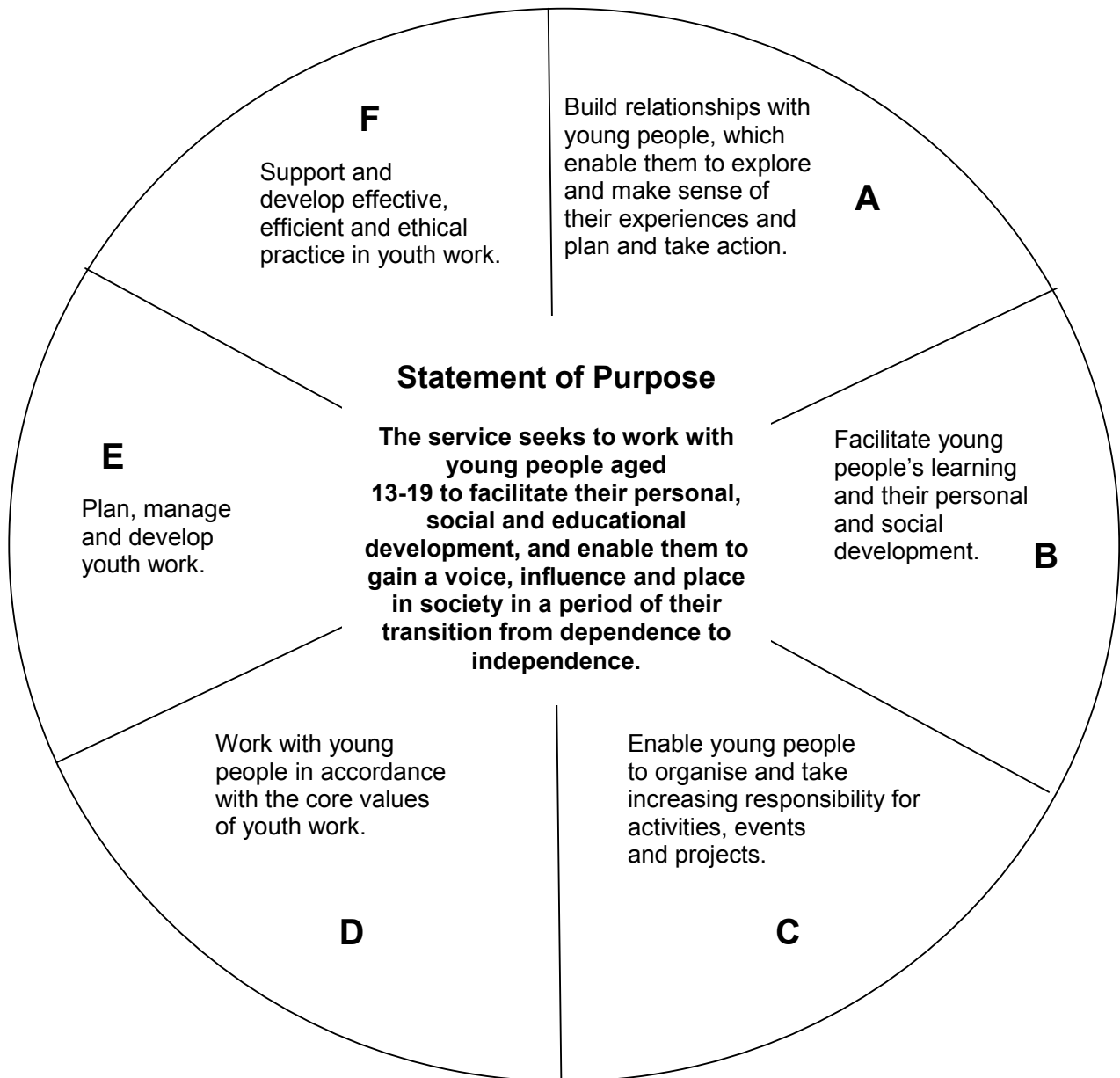
Working within its overall Mission, CYSS seeks to work with young people aged 13-19 to facilitate their personal, social and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence and place in society in a period of their transitions from dependence to independence.

Primary focus is given to those young people from targeted groups such as:

- Those from urban 'priority' areas
- Those from rural communities
- Those who are considered vulnerable or at risk from exclusion
- Those with specific needs
- Those who are not in education, employment or training

We achieve our values through programmes that are fun, challenging and educational.

Key Aspects of Youth Work



Occupational Standards for Youth Work - PAULO NTO, 2002

2.5 The National Occupational Standards for youth work

Key Aspects and Units of Youth Work

- A. Build relationships with young people that enable them to explore and make sense of their experiences, and plan and take action.**
 - A1 Establish relationships and maintain dialogue with young people.
 - A2 Enable young people to access and use information, and decisions.
 - A3 Enable young people to be active citizens.
 - A4 Support young people in tackling problems and taking action.
 - A5 Advocate on behalf of young people.

- B. Facilitate young people's learning and their personal and social development.**
 - B1 Enable young people to explore and develop their values and self-respect.
 - B2 Enable young people to develop awareness of their self-identity and being.
 - B3 Enable young people to work effectively in groups.
 - B4 Enable young people to use their learning to enhance their future development.

- C. Enable young people to organise and take increasing responsibility for activities, events and projects.**
 - C1 Work with young people to design and develop sessions.
 - C2 Work with young people to manage resources for events, activities or projects.
 - C3 Review progress and evaluate opportunities with young people.

- D. Work with young people in accordance with the core values of youth work.**
 - D1 Work as an effective and reflective practitioner.
 - D2 Work on ways, which promote equality of opportunity, participation and responsibility.
 - D3 Create and manage effective working relationships.
 - D4 Work with young people to safeguard their welfare.

E. Plan, manage and develop youth work.

- E1 Investigate needs and provision for young people and promote youth work opportunities.
- E2 Identify and establish relationships with other organisations and individuals.
- E3 Build and maintain partnership work.
- E4 Identify and secure resources for youth work.
- E5 Design and develop new youth work opportunities.
- E6 Manage youth work projects.

F. Support and develop effective, efficient and ethical practice in youth work.

- F1 Provide information to aid policy formation and the improvement of practices and provision.
- F2 Develop teams and individuals to enhance the quality of youth work.
- F3 Promote a culture of health and safety.
- F4 Promote a culture to safeguard the welfare of young people.
- F5 Manage systems to safeguard young people's welfare.

3.0 Cumbria Youth Support Services – Youth Work Curriculum

3.1 Purpose of our curriculum

The purpose of our curriculum is to give youth workers and stakeholders a clear framework, which both defines and supports the delivery of our work with young people. It will enable us to achieve our vision and mission, demonstrating the value and benefits of youth work in Cumbria.

3.2 What is our curriculum?

Youth work is an educational process that facilitates personal, social and educational development. This enables young people to make choices and have a voice and influence in society, in a period of their transition from dependence to independence.

Our curriculum has three principal elements:

- **Content**
Activities which enable a young person to acquire skills and knowledge, and develop an understanding of, and respect for, their own and other's attitudes and values.
- **Method**
Interventions which are made to assist a young person and enable learning and personal development to take place.
- **Assessment**
Measurable goals, achievements, and progress, including the methods used to record. If undertaken rigorously through internal and external verification, young people have the option of accrediting their achievements.

Our curriculum sets out a policy from which we plan and deliver our work with young people, as well as monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our practice. The key learning outcomes for individuals which are developed through our curriculum, focus on the development of:

- **Skills and abilities**
e.g. be able to communicate effectively;
- **Knowledge and understanding**
e.g. understand the roles played by members in a group;
- **Values and attitudes**
e.g. value the benefits of working co-operatively in a group.

4.0 Curriculum content

4.1 Overview

Young people clearly need to be at the heart of our curriculum, and in particular, those who experience social exclusion. These young people form the **primary focus** of our work.

We need to ensure that the **youth work process**, which forms the basis of our interventions with young people, is underpinned by our core principles and values that are stated in section 2.0, whilst ensuring that fun is a major part of any youth work programme, as this serves to attract young people, keep them interested and engaged, and helps to provide a positive and enjoyable learning environment:

The facilitating of young people’s personal, social and educational development forms the **core of our curriculum** with youth workers engaging with young people in a wide range of **contexts**, such as open centre provision, detached projects or through school based work.

And finally, there are the potential outcomes of our curriculum, ways in which we can identify and measure the effectiveness of our interventions. These include **individual learning outcomes** around *knowledge, understanding, skills, abilities, attitudes and values* as well as broader **curriculum outcomes**, which encompass the five ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes.

Diagram 4.1 sets out the five ECM outcomes and identifies the range of aims, which underpin them. For more information on Every Child Matters visit www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Every Child Matters				
BE HEALTHY	STAY SAFE	ENJOY AND ACHIEVE	MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL BEING
Physically healthy	Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence, and sexual exploitation	Ready for school	Engage in decision making and support the community and environment	Engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school
Mentally and emotionally healthy	Safe from accidental injury or death	Attend and enjoy school	Engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school	Ready for employment
Sexually healthy	Safe from bullying and discrimination	Achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school	Develop positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate	Live in decent homes and sustainable communities
Healthy lifestyles	Safe from crime and anti social behaviour in or out of school	Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation	Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges	Access transport and material goods
Choose not to take illegal drugs	Have security, stability and are cared for	Achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school	Develop enterprising behaviour	Live in households free of low income

4.2 Making the links

The curriculum has been designed to allow workers to make the links between our core principles and purpose and how they help us to best meet the needs of young people, while considering the effectiveness and impact of our work.

Example

Some detached workers make regular contact with a young person who is often found under the influence of alcohol. Over a number of weeks the workers explore with the young person the reasons for their behaviour and establish that the young person has recently lost a close family member and they are finding it hard to cope.

The core curriculum focus of the intervention was around **expressing and coping with feelings**, with the young person acknowledging the potential risks that their behaviour may be having on their health, with this subsequently leading them to seek help through their doctor. The outcomes can be linked to ECM 1 around **being healthy**.

Identified young person	Curriculum context	Core curriculum	Individual learning outcomes	ECM curriculum outcomes
<i>Identified risk taking behaviour around alcohol use</i>	<i>Long term detached</i>	<i>Expressing and coping with feelings</i>	<i>Young person is able to understand the risks their behaviour may have on their health</i>	<i>Being healthy</i>

5.0 Curriculum Process

5.1 Developing the Curriculum

At the point of engagement with young people, the following features distinguish our work and inform our curriculum:

- Young people choose to be involved (not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun).
- The work starts where individuals are, for example, with their views of the world and their interests, as well as on their territory.
- It seeks to go beyond where individuals start, in particular by encouraging them to be critical and creative in their response to their experience and the world around them.
- It takes place because young people are young people, not because they have been labelled (e.g. drug user; disengaged; homeless ...).
- It focuses on the individual as a whole person with particular experiences, interests and perspectives.
- It recognises, respects, and is actively responsive to the wider networks of peers, community, and culture, which are important to young people.
- Through these networks it seeks to help individuals achieve stronger collective identities – for example, as black people, women, disabled people, gay men, or lesbians.
- It is concerned with how individuals feel and what they value, not just with what they know and can do.
- It works with other agencies that are able to contribute to the delivery of personal and social development opportunities.
- It complements school and college-based education by encouraging and providing opportunities for individuals to achieve and fulfil their potential.

These features of our work enable us to put our clients at the heart of our work. They have a key role to play in shaping the content of our curriculum, ensuring that youth and community work practice is relevant, attractive and fun.

Our practice is curriculum-informed rather than curriculum-led.

5.2 Agreeing & delivering the curriculum

Youth work takes place where youth workers and young people meet to engage in activities that are in line with agreed key purposes and reflect key principles.

It takes place indoors and outdoors, in the community and away from the community, in places set aside for young people and within the wider community. These places therefore include youth and community centres, church and village halls, information and advice centres, mobile facilities, activities, trips away from home, and informal encounters in places where young people meet for reasons other than youth and community work.

Youth workers employ a range of creative informal styles of delivery, developing strategies which raise issues with young people, as well as responding to issues raised by individuals or groups themselves.

Through this approach young people engage voluntarily in our curriculum, often through conversations with peers and/or youth workers, or through involvement in fun and creative activities.

This style of working uses experiential learning as its main method. It seeks to encourage individuals to use their personal experiences gained through participation in youth & community activities, to enable them to engage in the reflective process necessary to encourage development.

A critical element of our work is the conversations that occur between young people and youth workers. It is through these conversations that our curriculum is agreed with them.

5.3 The range of curriculum delivery

CYSS have established a wide range of projects and services across the county. This enables us to work in a flexible and responsive way, attracting a wide and diverse range of young people, meeting a range of differing needs.

The range of opportunities and services currently includes:

- evening, weekend and holiday provision
- accreditation programmes for young people
- advice, information and advocacy services
- community development and community capacity building
- creative arts work
- detached and outreach work
- detached youth work
- drugs support

- extended services
- financial support to the voluntary sector
- formal and informal programmes of personal, social and health education and citizenship
- homeless and housing projects
- information communication technology
- multi-agency project development
- open youth and community centre provision
- opportunities for active citizenship and volunteering
- opportunities for young people to influence service provision
- outdoor education
- peer education and mentoring
- specialist support groups
- support to young people in formal education
- support to young people leaving formal education
- teenage and sexual health and relationship work
- young people's participation and involvement
- youth club, project and group work
- youth sport development

5.4 Applying our curriculum

We are committed to delivering excellent youth services through the implementation and development of our curriculum, ensuring that all provision is focused on educational outcomes.

CYSS Youth Work Quality Standards are used as a benchmark for measuring the success of our curriculum delivery.

5.5 What our curriculum will achieve

As well as enabling us to achieve our vision and mission, the curriculum empowers young people to make informed choices and decisions, offering encouragement to try new things, develop new skills, acquire knowledge and understanding and explore attitudes and values in a fun, interesting and challenging way.

It also recognises individual progress and achievement, offering young people opportunities and pathways to accreditation, where appropriate.

The curriculum enables youth workers to answer this simple question.

'What will an individual know, understand, value or be able to do better, as a result of taking part in this youth work activity?'

6.0 Principles into practice

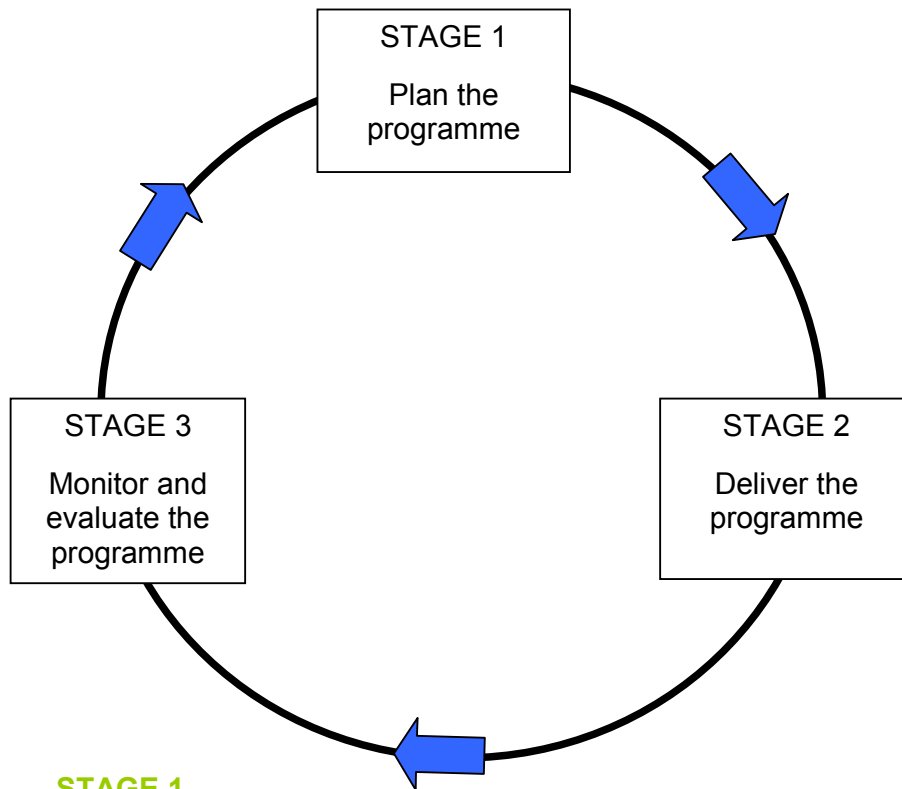
6.1 Introduction

One of the key factors considered during the development of this curriculum document has been the desire to provide youth workers with comprehensive and practical guidance, which will enable them to effectively use the curriculum to underpin and inform their youth work practice.

This next section provides you with a brief overview of how to systematically plan, deliver and evaluate our youth work curriculum, as well as considering how to record and accredit individual progress and achievement.

To accompany the guidance offered here, a range of curriculum tool kits have been produced, which offer a more comprehensive guide to ***'planning, evaluating and recording your youth work'***, and ***'accrediting young people's achievements'***.

6.2 Systematic approach to curriculum delivery



STAGE 1

Planning the programme

Planning the youth work curriculum includes the totality of the experiences; opportunities and challenges provided both directly and indirectly, for and by young people, through informal education. The structure of any planned programme should include our three principle elements of **content**, **method** and **assessment**. (see paragraph 2.3):

Therefore your learning plan should specify:

- ❑ how young people's needs are identified in local units;
- ❑ how need identification links to the service's/organisation's overall planning and resourcing framework;
- ❑ in the light of these needs, what learning outcomes and content should normally be covered within your programme;
- ❑ the method and structured experiences which may be used; and
- ❑ the arrangements for the monitoring and assessment of the learning gained by individuals and any accreditation thereof.

For further guidance, including planning models and tools, please refer to the '**planning, evaluating and reviewing your youth work**' tool kit.

STAGE 2

Delivering the programme

A balanced programme will:

- ❑ Include the elements of whole session i.e. informal work as well as the activity programme.
- ❑ Offer a range of activities and methods with both worker-led and young person-led elements identified in the programme.
- ❑ Acknowledge the range of skills and abilities of the staff
- ❑ Acknowledge the social, cultural and geographical setting of the project;
- ❑ Reflect the differences within the groups of young people using the project, in terms of culture and race, gender, disability, age, and recognise their varying needs and starting points;
- ❑ Reflect the four main principles of practice, namely that it is educative, participative, provides equality of opportunity and empowering
- ❑ Be FUN and take risks – be creative, adventurous, and different, don't just stick to the safe options.
- ❑ Move young people on, raise awareness and be clear about the learning it is hoped young people will achieve as a result of the programme;
- ❑ Respond to issues spontaneously as they arise and be flexible enough to respond to ideas/needs expressed at all times;
- ❑ Recognise the limitations imposed by the setting, staffing levels and experience, resources available etc.

STAGE 3

Monitoring & evaluating the programme

Monitoring means keeping an eye on the youth work you are involved in, with the purpose of keeping it on track. Evaluating means making judgements about the value of a piece of youth work, assessing the

learning outcomes for young people, including any unexpected outcomes.

What does the individual know, understand, value or is able to do better, as a result of taking part in this youth work activity?

Consideration also needs to be given to what should happen next.

For further guidance, including evaluation models and tools, please refer to the '**planning, evaluating and recording your youth work**' tool kit.

6.3 Recording & accrediting young peoples achievements

Throughout the three stages highlighted above it is vitally important that youth workers are able to capture and record individual progress and achievement.

Any method of recording will need to ensure that it:

- enables youth workers to show the benefit derived and demonstrates personal progress as a result of a youth work intervention. *Recorded outcomes need to identify the achievement/learning gained for individuals, even in the context of a group setting;*
- provides evidence to show action/progression/direction travelled which is evidenced by the youth worker. *Evidence may identify starting points, describe the process /what happened and be clear about the achievement/learning end product;*
- is meaningful, not just a narrative of events;
- Identifies young people's progress and success in responding to, and achieving targets set for the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding;
- Identifies young people's personal development, including their attitudes, values, beliefs and self confidence;
- Shows evidence of links back to the curriculum;
- identifies young people's ability to function as active citizens who are both autonomous individuals and responsible members of the community.

For further guidance, including tools for measuring impact and recording outcomes, please refer to the '**planning, evaluating and recording your youth work**' tool kit.

Building on the recorded outcome, youth workers can help individuals to recognise and record progress and achievement through some form of **non-formal accreditation** process.

In recent years the range of non-formal accreditation programmes, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Open College Network and ASDAN. But some common characteristics help to set apart these awards from in-house certificates of participation and other forms of recorded outcomes. They:

- are rigorous;
- are open to being externally verified;
- are able to accredit both individuals and groups;
- are able to accredit a journey travelled rather than a set standard of achievements alone;
- use other communication methods in addition to writing and reading;
- do not discriminate unfairly;
- involve young people in its setting up and its administration;
- do not spoil the initial contact time;
- have credibility outside of youth work, and may include a link to formal education, employment and training.

It is important to stress that accreditation is not a delivery approach or a curriculum topic area and should never be the sole reason for undertaking a piece of work. What we are seeking to do is to accredit our curriculum-informed work and the skills, knowledge and understanding, as well as the development of values and attitudes that transpire from it.

For further guidance on the wide range of non-formal programmes available to young people through the service please refer to the **'accrediting young peoples achievements'** tool kit.

7.0 Acknowledgements

A Curriculum for Youth Work in Lancashire, Lancashire County Council, 2005

NSF Development Framework (NYA) Flint & Jackson, 2003

Towards a Contemporary Curriculum (NYA) Merton & Wylie, 2003

National Occupational Standards (PAULO NTO), 2002

Credit Where Credit's Due: Guidance on Youth Service Benchmarks (NYA) Viv McKee, 2004

Transforming Youth Work – Resourcing Excellent Youth Services – DfES, 2002

Dorset Youth & Community Service - Curriculum - Our Policy and Putting it into Practice, 2004

Every Child Matters, H.M.Govt, (TSO) Sept 2003

CUMBRIA YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

YOUTH PLEDGE

YOU CAN EXPECT:

1. Access to a range of activities, projects and clubs that provide opportunities for you to learn new skills for life.
2. Your service to be local and there for you, if and when you need it, no matter who you are.
3. Good confidential information, advice and support covering a wide range of issues relating to young people.
4. A quality, well-equipped, welcoming, safe place to access services.
5. Workers to be well trained, professional, reliable, and trustworthy.
6. To be respected, trusted, listened to and treated equally whilst not being judged for the person you are.
7. To be told what confidentiality means and to who and where information may go.
8. To be able to easily feedback your views and get involved to influence and improve future services.