

Targeted Youth Services Consultation Summary Feedback July 2017

Introduction

Bristol City Council published a draft commissioning plan for Targeted Youth Services for formal consultation running from 2nd February to 27th April 2017. The consultation feedback informs the planning of future youth services commencing 1st April 2018.

The consultation was advertised via Voscur, by email to key stakeholders, through notifications on Bristol City Council and partner Facebook and Twitter and local press releases. A draft commissioning plan was made available for young people to read, and separate consultation questions aimed at young people were posed to encourage their engagement. The consultation engaged with people via two on line surveys (adult and young people), events and meetings with both adults and young people. We also received feedback via email. This document provides a summary of feedback, a more detailed report is also available [\[insert link\]](#).

What we asked

The draft commissioning plan included options for contracting, thoughts on the service proposals, qualifications, and social value. The Young people's questionnaire asked about use of youth services, barriers to taking part, activities, what they need support with, how they feedback on services and what the services should be called.

Consultation Responses

A) Young People's responses

Feedback from the young person's survey shows that young people want to attend services that can offer a wide variety of different activities; particularly discussion groups and physical / outdoor activities.

The majority of young people who responded want support with personal skills (e.g. improving self-confidence, communication skills, self-awareness, problem solving, teamwork, negotiation) and work related activities (e.g. work tasters, workplace behaviour, CV and interview skills). The survey highlighted bullying as a main factor that would prevent young people from attending youth services.

At the young person's event and visits to youth services we asked young people to design their perfect youth services to meet the needs of the population and equalities groups. The majority of services designed gave young people somewhere to go to talk to people about any issues. Young people said they wanted trustworthy and friendly workers who treated them with respect. They wanted credible staff that had been through similar situations with the appropriate training to deal with their needs. A large portion of services designed were for specialist groups, there were several designs which proposed an initial closed specialist group, with the view of the group then slowly integrating into the mainstream, e.g. a group for refugees and asylum seekers to build their confidence and English until they were ready to attend a mainstream group. 16% of the services were designed specifically

for certain equalities groups, highlighting that young people would like some specialist services to be retained.

There was a clear desire for mainstream services that could meet specialist drug and alcohol / healthy relationships needs. Only four services were designed that would exclusively focus on drug and alcohol / healthy relationships, all other services designed to meet this need were general youth services with specialist workers there that they could go to with any drug and alcohol or healthy relationship issues. However when asked about what activities they wanted to do, the majority said they wanted to have someone to talk to and somewhere to go to with a variety of artistic, physical, discussion and outdoor activities to take part in.

Only 12% of young people surveyed had found out about youth services from the RIFE / go places to play websites and only 9% from social media. The majority of young people (46%) had heard about services through friends whilst 42% had found out through parents / adults. 58% of the young people wanted to feedback about services via social media.

B) Adult responses

Contract combinations

We proposed 3 contract models and asked which would be the best way of delivering the services.

The majority of respondents opted for 3 citywide contracts and 3 area based contracts with the specific support elements included rather than separate.

NEET Co-ordination and Data Management

We asked if people agreed with the proposal for a citywide contract to co-ordinate the data and intelligence to track young people who are or may be NEET (and the Not Known population).

The majority of survey respondents agreed with the creation of a separate contract to deliver NEET Coordination and data management. Responses shared concerns that the provider will need to co-ordinate effectively, and work with schools and colleges closely. It was also questioned whether this should be brought in-house to be delivered by Bristol City Council (BCC).

Sector Support Funding

We asked if people agreed with the proposal for a citywide 'Supporting the Youth Sector' contract to work with the sector, promote proactive partnership and support providers to be part of the solution to respond to rising demands and needs.

58% of survey respondents agreed with the supporting the youth sector proposals, 24% did not agree and 18% did not know. In the engagement sessions this proposal was, on the whole, very positively received. Responses highlighted the successful provider must have experience of delivering locally with a strong record of partnership work. Feedback also suggested the provider must have a positive equalities agenda that is inclusive and supportive of specialist projects for equalities groups. Concerns were raised that the funding was too large and too small – too

small to make a difference, and too large because of the impact it may have on taking funds away from other service delivery.

Online youth service

We asked if people agreed with the proposal to create/maintain an online service to advertise positive activities to children and young people and signpost to organisations for information advice & guidance.

69% of survey respondents agreed with the proposals for an online service however there was some questioning over the high cost of the contract with some calls for this to be reduced or tapered. However feedback also advised against this arguing that doing so would reduce the service ability to create new, interesting content for the website which is the main driver of traffic and engagement. Concerns were raised about the accessibility of the website, for example, for those who are not literate. Concerns were also raised around those families and young people who can't access the internet.

Specific Support Services

We asked if people agreed with the proposal to include 2 elements of specific support: sexual health and drug and alcohol services.

52% of respondents agreed with the outlined specific support services proposals, 32% did not agree and 15% did not know. The majority of respondents fed back that they want the specific support services to be included within the local area based contracts as opposed to a separate city wide contract. There was a considerable lobby for LGBTQ+ specific services; 13% of survey respondents lobbied for this in addition to 13 individual email submissions. Arguments in favour of LGBTQ+ specific services highlighted the need for a location away from local area services where they may not be out and where young people from school, who have made their life difficult, could be attending. There was a strong view that having no LGBTQ+ specific services would lead to increased isolation for LGBTQ+ young people.

Feedback suggested that the time limits to engagement should be a recommendation not a requirement, in order to stop young people needing to return to a service at a later date. Suggestions were made that the specialist services should not be limited solely to 1to1 work and group work should also be undertaken which allows young people to self-identify and increase engagement.

Local area based services

We asked if people agreed with the proposal for local area based services to work across Bristol delivering projects that represent their local demographic, but targeted to those areas most in need including those who are NEET and provide inclusive and accessible help to children and young people with additional needs or vulnerabilities.

The majority (48%) of respondents agreed with the local area targeted youth services proposals, 33% disagreed and 19% did not know. Responses highlighted a disagreement with the financial split with a strong lobby for funding to be increased in the North. Multiple respondents suggested that the funding calculation should

consider the areas with the top 30% highest deprivation as opposed to just the top 10%.

Comments were made about the plan needing to have a stronger direction on work with equalities groups such as emphasising the need for meeting the specific needs of young people with disabilities and young people from BAME backgrounds. Concerns were raised about moving all equality group services into the mainstream, and ensuring adequate training provided and evidenced in order to meet the needs of equalities groups effectively within mainstream services. There was a suggestion there needed to be a clear set out view of inclusion, and how will this be meaningfully implemented within practice including the need for adequate training for staff. Again there was a very strong response from young people who attend a particular LGBTQ+ service against moving from specialist into mainstream youth provision, with a strong preference for specialist LGBTQ+ services to be retained.

Much feedback highlighted the importance of open access provision with calls to ensure that we do retain services, building positive relationships with young people and holding onto the principals of good youth work. Linked to this the need to measure success and impact beyond short term targets.

Feedback highlighted the need to include play provision as it is currently unclear as to whether or not this will still be funded, with many respondents highlighting the benefits of play and stating it needs to continue.

Qualifications

We asked if people agreed with the outlined expected standards of creating a service that has an appropriate mix of professionals with the skills and experience including qualified youth engagement workers and qualified careers advisors.

52% respondents agreed with the proposals around expected standards/ qualifications, 38% disagreed and 10% did not know. Whilst the majority of respondents agreed that it was important to employ a skilled and qualified workforce, there was also a strong response that suggested talented youth workers without qualifications should not be excluded from working within services as paper qualifications do not necessarily translate to an understanding of diverse communities. The responses highlighted the importance of volunteers and workers from within the community of the service, and how expecting workers to hold an NVQ would exclude these large sections of the community who do not have access to this training for financial or other means.

Purchasing plan

We put forward possible collaborative arrangements for people to consider and asked which collaborative arrangement they would prefer.

The narrow majority of respondents opted for collaboration with a lead organisation, although opinions on this were very mixed. There was strong feedback that clear leadership and communication will be required and that a lead or prime provider must be able to evidence excellence in multi-agency partnership work. There must be clear expectations around outcomes and contract management for all providers to work to.

Social Value

Our proposed requirement for social value was for providers to offer apprenticeships and work experience. We asked potential providers if they thought this would cause any potential problems in the contract.

The majority of respondents (57%) did not think that this would cause any problems for the contract, 29% thought that it would and 14% did not know. Respondents fed back that apprenticeships must be meaningful with clear oversight and leadership. The biggest issue raised by respondents was that this proposal may exclude small and voluntary sector organisations from the tender process as they may not have the capacity to offer apprenticeships. It was recommended that social value was kept more open for providers to suggest how innovative solutions could be offered in addition to the contract delivery.

Contract Name

We asked people what they thought the contract should be called.

A total 49% of respondents (adults and young people) thought that we should keep the name Bristol Youth Links, 39% did not mind, 22% wanted to call it something different. There was a stronger response from adults that now the contract has been established, the current name should be kept. However there were calls to leave the decision to young people, and young people didn't mind so much if the name changed.

C) Scrutiny input 17th July 2017

The People Scrutiny Commission received a New Contract for Targeted Youth Services presentation from officers, and the following comments were noted in discussion:

- a. Councillors agreed and were encouraged that there had been a thorough process of consultation with good councillor engagement. Councillors recognised that meaningful adjustments, had addressed the points councillors had raised.
- b. For example, adjustments to deprivation criteria, had been made in response to feedback and this was evidenced in the current iteration of the proposed commissioning model.
- c. Councillors were pleased to see NEET data management being brought in-house
- d. Councillors welcomed the proposed tapering of online resources in order to obtain best value for money
- e. Noted that providers would need to tailor their bids to demonstrate their capability to respond to the profile of specialised need and specific outcomes required in the three geographical areas.

We will do

We have reviewed the feedback and revised the commissioning plan accordingly. It is our intention to proceed with the three geographically based contracts (three local areas North, South and East Central) and we will roll the specialist support elements into these three contracts rather than procure separate citywide specific contracts for Drugs and Alcohol Support and Healthy Relationship Support. In

addition we will commission online services and youth sector support services totalling five contracts.

We propose to bring the NEET element in-house for Bristol City Council to manage. There will be a small team of staff who will track young people by email, calls and social media, liaise with schools/ colleges and other providers to keep the data management up to date and to take responsibility for reporting progress to Government. They will refer young people who are NEET or Not Known to the area based providers to engage and encourage them to participate in education, employment and training.

The LGBTQ+ support specific services will not be added back into the contract as a specialist contract but will be delivered in the local area based targeted youth support services on the basis that the provision will need to be inclusive to young people. We will ask providers to ensure there is provision to meet the needs of a range of vulnerable young people including LGBTQ+ young people and that staff have the skills and knowledge to do this.

The Online Service will now include other websites for Children's Services such as Findability - the Local Offer website for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their parents and carers to promote inclusive opportunities for all children and young people, and the Works website of learning opportunities for 16-19 year olds. In response to feedback that the contract cost was too high, the funding will be tapered. The provider will need to engage with children, young people and their parent/ carers to ensure the resources are accessible, attractive and easy to use.

There was not a model that proved unanimously most popular for collaboration and as such we would support collaborative arrangements with a lead organisation, with joint responsibility and include the opportunity for subcontracting.

In response to feedback that questioned the funding allocation across the geographical areas we will use a wider funding formula which still invests in the 10% most deprived areas but also takes account of population size and the areas up to 30% most deprived according to the index of multiple deprivation.

We will extend the social value requirement beyond apprenticeships and work experience placements.

In response to concerns raised around the exclusion of less qualified but highly talented workers, providers will be able to employ less qualified staff but would be expected to support them to work towards qualifications and training for the work they are undertaking.

Universal services will not be provided as part of this contract; the Sector Support Funding is designed to provide investment to universal services. However providers may develop targeted group provision to provide a pathway from one to one support they provide. We hope providers will be innovative in their delivery and consider options such as running provision and making a small charge for entry to

contribute to costs, use options such as crowd funding and work with other providers in their local areas to invest in wider provision or support them to access the Sector Support funding etc. Working with the Council's Youth and Community workers there may be opportunities to set up local groups with other agencies to pool funding to tackle particular issues such as street crime, youth disorder, Bonfire night diversionary activities etc.

We aim to commission an organisation with a track record of fundraising and grant giving/ funding allocation to manage the youth sector support contract. We will ask them to develop and co-ordinate a funding process, e.g. small grants, that will operate through a multi-agency panel that can respond to need and gaps in provision, investing in the sector with a particular focus on smaller providers. The multi-agency panel will have representatives from the Council's Youth and Community team and from the three area contracts to ensure there is intelligence on what already exists in the areas to avoid duplication and ensure there is investment in the areas that need it most. As this is a new innovation, the way this contract operates is likely to evolve over the life of the contract and we will be monitoring the contract and evaluating the approach to ensure it is effective in delivering our aims. In response to feedback the funding to this contract will be increased in year one to provide upfront investment to establish the approach, which will then be tapered each year with the expectation that the provider will identify and secure alternative sources of funding to offset the reduction.

Finally we are proposing that the name of these contracts change to reflect the change in the emphasis and delivery of the work to a more targeted model. In its development we have called this contract Targeted Youth Services and will work with the providers and young people to consider names for the new service when the contracts are in place. We will not propose emphasis on 'branding' the services, it is more important the services are reaching, engaging and meeting outcomes for young people over what the contract name is.