Recording Young People's Progress and Accreditation in Youth Work
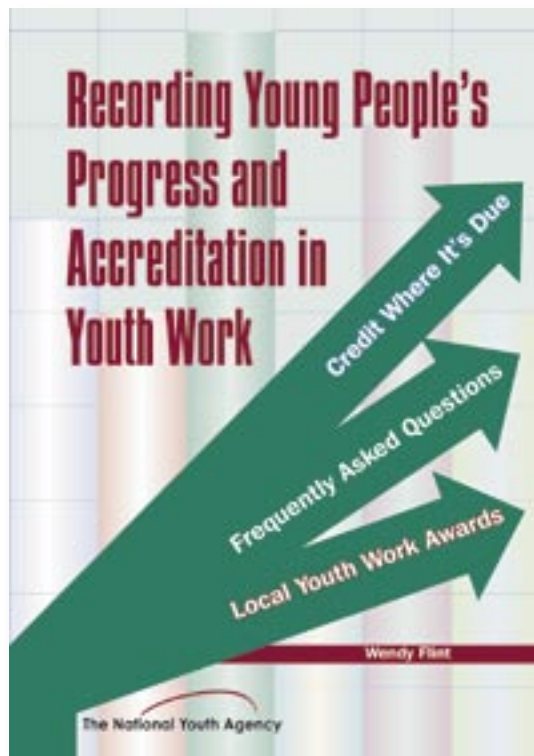
Credit Where It's Due

Frequently Asked Questions

Local Youth Work Awards

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The National Youth Agency

Contents may be photocopied free of charge for training purposes.

Contents

Acknowledgments

Credit Where It's Due

Guidance on Youth Service Benchmarks

Context

This is the third edition of the guidance paper *Credit Where It's Due* and accompanying *Frequently Asked Questions* which were initially developed in June 2004 by The National Youth Agency (The NYA) in discussion with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and revised in October 2004 following a period of 'field trial'. The original guidance provides youth services with clarification on some of the benchmarks first identified in *Resourcing Excellent Youth Services* (REYS) and Margaret Hodge's subsequent letter of 3 December 2003. In this revision the guidance has been brought in line with the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), and the *Frequently Asked Questions* paper considerably expanded to take account of the range of queries raised.

The introduction of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) 221a and 221b[1], recorded and accredited outcomes gained by young people 'as a result of their participation in youth work', has clearly indicated government's commitment to the role of youth services in enabling young people to meet their full potential. These benchmarks identify outcomes for young people and gauge the impact of youth work on their personal and social development.

In working towards BVPIs and youth service performance indicators it is vital that youth work practitioners and managers are clear about what is expected. Services across the country have responded in a variety of ways and a summary of early comments and issues can be found in the interim 'Data Collection Report' issued by The NYA in March 2005[2]. Whilst this range of methods and approaches enables individual services and providers to meet local need, it is important to have agreement on the definition of key terms to secure a reasonable level of consistency in reporting. Clearly it is not possible or necessarily desirable to always provide 'absolutes'; we are dealing with individuals and the exercise of professional judgment is a key feature of effective youth work practice.

The four benchmarks of contact, participation, recorded outcomes and accredited outcomes are also incorporated into the annual youth service audit. The intention is, over time, to even up the quality of youth services and sharpen their focus on securing positive outcomes for young people.

The NYA and DfES will be pleased to receive your comments on the guidance and the implementation process at local level and will respond to queries as the processes roll out. Please address comments and queries in the first instance to Wendy Flint, Development Officer, at The NYA.

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The Guidance

This guidance addresses BVPI 221a (recorded outcomes) and 221b (accredited outcomes) as well as the benchmarks for contact and participation. It should be used alongside the annual Local Authority Youth Service operational planning guidance and relevant advice from government offices.

1 Contact

The benchmark is for youth services to have contact with 25 per cent of their 13 to 19 population (to reflect the cultural diversity of the community). 'Contact' will be the term used in reporting youth service activities.

The definition of a contact is:
- the youth worker knows the name and face of the young person and is consciously building a relationship with that young person; and,
  for example:
- the young person may attend events occasionally; or,
- the young person may seek information or advice; or,
- the young person may be involved in issue-based session/s with a group at a school (but attendances at school assemblies do not count).

2 Participation

The benchmark is for 15 per cent of the 13 to 19 population to participate in youth service provision.

The definition of a participant is:
- a young person with whom the youth worker has an ongoing relationship; and,
- the young person is involved with/attends youth work sessions/activities on a regular basis and is participating in a youth work curriculum in some way; and/or,
- the young person takes part in a 'concentrated experience' – a piece of focused work such as a residential event or project.

3 Recorded outcomes

The benchmark is for 60 per cent of participants to gain a recorded outcome.
BVPI 221a identifies the features of recorded outcomes (copied below); Work towards meeting the benchmark will require youth workers to make a professional judgment about the progress and development of young people they work with.

'Recorded outcomes' must have the following features:
- Provide evidence to show actions undertaken by the young person, their progression, and distance travelled – *to show distance travelled the record must identify starting points, describe the process/identify what happened, and be clear about the achievement, learning gain or end product. This may include, for instance, a decision made as a result of counselling or a detached work encounter*.
- Provide evidence of the benefit derived by the young person as a result of a youth work intervention.
- Be evidenced (though not accredited) by a youth worker or an external awarding body.
- Be meaningful (not just a narrative of events) – *it must confirm the achievement of a declared objective that is significant for that individual young person*. Some subjective judgments will need to be made in assessing what constitutes a 'significant' objective for each young person, given their backgrounds and skill levels.

When reporting against BVPI 221a and the recorded outcomes section in the annual NYA audit you will be reporting on the number and percentage of young people gaining a recorded outcome related to 15 per cent of the 13 to 19 population.

Recording outcomes with/for young people requires a flexible approach to ensure it can include the full range of important progress that youth work can help young people to make. However, the process of recording also requires us to be systematic and thorough in the planning and monitoring of the work we undertake. Key skills for youth workers are the ability to make sound, productive relationships with young people and to engage in those important conversations and processes which help individual young people reflect on their lives and how they want to live them.

As one youth worker puts it:
'Recording outcomes is about capturing those youth work moments …'

Having a systematic approach doesn't mean we are unable to respond to the unplanned, or that innovation is stifled. It does mean, however, that workers' skills in reviewing and planning are vital to ensure that we can make the most of the opportunities that youth work provides for young people.

The points in BVPI 221a are ones that youth workers are familiar with; they are derived from the October 2004 version of '*Credit*'. In the next section each point is taken separately and brief clarification given below. Please refer to the accompanying '*Frequently Asked Questions*' (FAQs) document to assist you in thinking through related issues.

● 'Provide evidence to show actions undertaken by the young person, their progression, and distance travelled – *to show distance travelled the record must identify starting points, describe the process/identify what happened, and be clear about the achievement, learning gain or end product. This may include, for instance, a decision made as a result of counselling or a detached work encounter.'*

It may be the knowledge, skills or experience gained as a result of involvement in a project or residential; the variations are as broad as a young person's imagination. Appropriate evidence of progress can take many forms, it does not have to be written but may be a drama production, a video, a song, a sculpture or other art work etc. See FAQs for more details.

● 'Provide evidence of the benefit derived by a young person as a result of a youth work intervention.'

This means that the recorded outcome is the result of identifiable progress that has been made within a programme of youth work. Youth work often takes place with young people in groups and it is within the group that meaningful individual progress takes place. Recorded outcomes need to identify the achievement/learning gains (see below) for individual members and describe any particular role undertaken by a young person. This may include, for example, a local certificate for involvement in a particular event, reaching a personal goal or target. The learning gain may be, for example, a change in behaviour or attitude, an increase in knowledge or acquisition of a new skill.

● '*Be evidenced (though not accredited) by a youth worker or an external awarding body.*'

The evidence of progress made by young people should be 'signed off' by a youth worker. This is the point at which you put a tick in the box and a date against 'recorded outcome' on your database or the sheets you use to record this for your authority or organisation. There may be instances when a recorded outcome is the result of work undertaken towards an external awarding body; in which case the awarding body's acceptance of progress/achievement is used as evidence.

● '*Be meaningful (not just a narrative of events) – it must confirm the achievement of a declared objective that is significant for that individual young person. Some subjective judgments will need to be made in assessing what constitutes a "significant" objective for each young person, given their backgrounds and skill levels.*'

Young people make many small steps on their learning journeys. For some individuals each small step is the achievement of a significant objective and worthy of record. For others, a number of steps will be 'rolled up' into a package which meets their declared objective and so becomes the recorded outcome. Clearly, to be able to chart young people's journeys it will be necessary to have an indication of their starting points. Of course, not all young people will have a structured needs assessment carried out with them as soon as they become a participant. In some cases, workers and young people will be 'looking back' to starting points and reviewing the progress made over time. However, youth work is planned and structured activity which is based on the needs of young people participating in the programme. As such, some assessment of need will have taken place to enable workers to answer the question 'Why this particular programme or activity?' or 'How does this programme/activity support the learning objectives/needs of these young people?'

This point talks about 'subjective' judgment. This means the professional judgment of the youth worker involved. For a learning experience to be meaningful it should result in an outcome that is fully understood by the young person and is sustainable over time.

● '*Be recognisable within Ofsted frameworks for inspection – the record should be able to provide evidence to inspectors seeking to report within the section "Standards of young people's achievement and the quality of youth work practice".*'

Recorded outcomes should be owned by the young person. Their progress and achievements (which are due to work with the youth service) are also clearly indicators of effective practice. The quality of recorded outcomes matters, primarily for young people, but because key information can be taken into account in assessing the overall service performance.

There are three key Ofsted measures[3] that recorded outcomes can address:
◗ young people's success in responding to, and achieving, challenging targets set and negotiated for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding;
◗ young people's personal development, including their attitudes, behaviour, values and self-confidence; and
◗ young people's ability to function socially and politically as both autonomous individuals and responsible members of a community.

BVPI 221a also identifies that 'a recorded outcome **does not**'

● 'have to subscribe to a specific format'.

In many services a 'standard' recording format is used to help with consistency. However, they should be flexible enough to enable recorded outcomes to:
◗ cater for different individuals – *a recording may use a range of formats that meet the needs and abilities of different young people and can accommodate a variety of levels of involvement; and*
◗ record a range of possible outcomes – *recognising that achievement is relative and depends on the starting point, the goals and length of time a young person has been involved as well as their individual needs.*

- 'necessarily lead to an accredited outcome – *a recorded outcome may be sufficient alone for some young people, for others it may form part of the learning journey towards an accredited outcome'.*

Recording that something positive has happened for a young person may be 'a first' for them and this recognition is adequate for their needs at present.

- 'have to be measured against a declared curriculum, but it can be good practice to do so'.

In this way, a recorded outcome can be used to mark the achievement of a previously negotiated target or series of targets for that individual young person – this may be an individual action plan covering a period of time/a course programme/a specific piece of project work.

A range of **tools/methods** can be used for recording; for example:
- *Young people* may use learning plans, evaluation sheets, video, photography, diary logs, scrapbooks, and music etc. The use of peer recording is an acceptable and, in many cases, a desirable part of the process. However, it is recommended that the recording is usually evidenced or signed off by a youth worker to count as a recorded outcome.

- *Youth workers* may use established frameworks, witness statements, dated recordings of a conversation with a young person, a standard recording form (perhaps shared by a local authority area or national voluntary organisation), notes made in an individual young person's file, evaluation and monitoring sheets etc. or a combination of these.

Where there is a 'product' eg a video, theatre production, series of photographs, booklet, newsletter etc. it will be necessary for the youth worker and/or young person to also record the process by which this was achieved and the learning that has accrued for the young person within that process. The product itself does not constitute a recorded outcome. The discussion about the process and learning will be of value to the young person as they will have a better understanding of their specific contribution to the achievement of the group.

Examples of recorded outcomes:

A young person who has been bullied at school and stopped attending regularly has been working with a project to identify the problems associated with attending school and agreed an action plan with the youth worker. A recorded outcome could be counted at the point at which the young person achieves one of the targets negotiated within their action plan.

The youth worker would need to have evidence to support this achievement and identify the learning gains for the individual young person. For example, the evidence might be a copy of the action plan in a file for that young person along with a witness statement which describes how the target has been reached and what that has meant for the young person.

In your detached work you have developed a relationship with a group of young people aged 13 to 16 who are engaged in a range of risky behaviour. One of the group has indicated that she/he is 'sometimes scared' by what happens when the group has been drinking heavily. You talk to her/him about their concerns and agree to go with them to a local project that has a specialist health education worker.

A recorded outcome could be counted at the point where the young person is engaged/involved with the project and has understood/learned more about alcohol use/abuse and is able to identify personal strategies to cope with behaviour within the group.

You are based in a 'one night a week' youth club that serves several communities in a rural area. During the evening you are talking with a young person who started attending the youth club in the last three to four weeks. They tell you that they are concerned about making choices at school that will have an effect on their future. As yet, they have no clear ideas about what they want to do in later life and are under pressure from parents to get a job and earn some money.

You put them in touch with their local Connexions service and agree to discuss the options in more detail the following week.

A recorded outcome could be counted at the point at which you know that the young person has met with a Personal Adviser and explored his/her options for the future.

You are running a structured life skills programme for four hours a day over 12 weeks. This involves the group of ten young people in a range of activities designed to enable their re-engagement with education, training or employment. As part of the programme young people are able to complete unit/s of a local or national award.

Not all members of the group will choose to or be able to gain an accredited outcome when they gain their award. However, all participants receive a certificate outlining their attendance and achievements and a recorded outcome could be counted at the point where the certificate is presented.

4 Accredited outcomes

The benchmark is for 30 per cent of participants to gain an accredited outcome.
BVPI 221b identifies the following features of an accredited outcome:

'Accredited outcomes' must have the following features:
- Be undertaken by young people supported within the youth work process.
- Have currency/credibility outside youth work including enhancing life and social skills and, where possible, a link to employment, education and training.
- Be subject to either independent internal verification by the organisation making the award or be externally assessed by an awarding body.

Taken from BVPI 221b – 'Participation In and Outcomes From Youth Work: Accredited Outcomes'

When reporting against BVPI 221b and the accredited outcomes section in the annual NYA audit you will be reporting on the number and percentage gaining an accredited outcome related to 15 per cent of the 13 to 19 population.

To count as an accredited outcome for the purposes of reporting, a young person must have successfully completed one or more modules of a nationally recognised award or a local award which carries accredited status (criteria and guidelines have been established for recognition of local youth work awards as recorded and accredited outcomes)[4] – see paper three in this publication.

Again, the points in BVPI 221b are familiar to youth workers; many of whom recognise the potential of accreditation to enhance a young person's future life chances. On some occasions a young person may start to work towards an accredited outcome but may not achieve an accreditation. In these cases what they have achieved, if properly supported and evidenced, can count as a recorded outcome.

In the next section each point is taken separately and brief clarification given below. Please refer to the accompanying *Frequently Asked Questions* (FAQs) document to assist you in thinking through related issues.

● **'Be undertaken by young people supported within the youth work process.'**

This means that young people are involved in a programme that is delivered within the values and ethos of youth work and enables them to have ownership of the process.

● **'Have currency/credibility outside youth work including enhancing life and social skills and, where possible, a link to employment, education and training.'**

Many of the accreditation routes widely used within youth work are chosen because of their obvious benefits to the development of young people who can effectively integrate in society and become active citizens.

● **'Be subject to either independent internal verification by the organisation making the award or be externally assessed by an awarding body.'**

There are different systems of verification for internally and externally assessed awards. However, the independence of the system is key to securing quality, equality, consistency and attention to the health and safety of workers and young people.

Key considerations

Local youth service awards

Criteria are established against which local authorities must benchmark their local award to determine whether it can be counted as an accredited outcome from April 2006. These criteria have been developed in conjunction with experienced youth workers and are based on those established by The Network for Accrediting Young People's Achievement. Our intention is to ensure that local awards have the potential to be recognised within future accreditation structures and that a measure of consistency is established across the country.

There are some local awards that will not meet the requirements for either a recorded or an accredited outcome, for example where attendance is the key outcome. The criteria and explanations are available in a paper issued by The National Youth Agency and available as the third paper in this document *Local Youth Work Awards. (Establishing the criteria for recognition of local youth work awards as recorded and accredited outcomes).(August 2005)*[5]

Over what period do the youth service performance measures need to be achieved?
● The benchmarks given are for contacts, participants and outcomes in one year and will be collected annually as part of The NYA Youth Service Audit as well as being reported against BVPI 221a and 221b.
● Each young person will count towards a benchmark once in any financial year.
● The same young people can count towards benchmark totals in the next year only if they are in contact with the service/attend and participate again, achieve another award (or section of an award), or make further progress that merits a recorded or accredited outcome.

Definition of youth work/youth services
There are many different forms of intervention with young people, for example welfare, policing, teaching. Youth work, however, is characterised by a particular combination of goals, methods and values. Each of these needs to be in place for a project or service to be considered youth work:
● **Goal** is the personal and social development of young people.
● **Values** are set out in Annex 1 of *Resourcing Excellent Youth Services* (attached as Appendix A, p9).
● **Methods** seek to promote learning and achievement through relationships with adults, which have been freely chosen by young people themselves.

The different forms of intervention with young people can be split into the following categories and are illustrated in the diagram opposite:

General services
Services which reach young people among others in the general population, such as sports facilities, housing, health, faith groups. They do not set out to deliver youth work but some may use youth work approaches and employ youth workers.

Services for young people
These are services dedicated to young people aged 13 to 19 years. Those providing these services are described in *REYS* as 'a complex network of providers,[6] community groups, voluntary organisations and local authorities'. This may include Connexions provision. However, depending on local arrangements, Connexions may be synonymous with the local authority youth service.
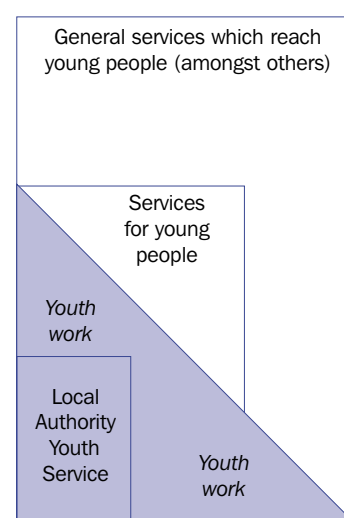
Some of these providers deliver youth work as described in the definition above, others do not. For example, a group of young people who organise their own football league with teams facilitated by a detached worker will fall within the youth work definition given above whereas young people participating in a local league football team do not count without the involvement of youth work facilitation.

Local authority youth service
This service is directly funded by the local authority to deliver youth work. It may be provided by the local authority itself or it may be commissioned from another body such as a voluntary sector provider and/or Connexions provider.

Which organisations' figures should count towards youth service benchmarks?

The benchmark of 25 per cent of the target population contacted can include figures from:
- local authority provided services;
- local authority commissioned services;
- youth provision secured through grants to voluntary and community organisations; and
- youth provision secured through partnerships.

In the collection of figures services should bear in mind:
- Reasonableness: Whilst every effort is made to offer consistent guidance it is not sensible to regulate for every eventuality. The local partners working together with young people within a set of national guidelines is an essential element of the process.
- The starting point for partnership work should be the *REYS* definition of youth service: 'The Youth Service is a complex network of providers, community groups, voluntary organisations and local authorities.'
- The spirit of *REYS* is to capture all the outcomes for young people secured through partnership working. Therefore if a youth service funds/supports, for example, a voluntary organisation or a Connexions partnership, then it should count its outcomes proportionate to the amount of the work supported.
- The relative merits of clarifying in a written agreement who can/will record which outcomes. Service level agreements are in regular use between local authorities and partners; it would seem advisable to clarify which figures each partner may count in any document that identifies resources and services.
- The process should involve minimum bureaucracy, whilst taking account of the need to meet other basic requirements such as health and safety, audit, quality assurance, child protection etc.
- Youth services should count the outcomes arising from the contributions they make to a range of initiatives such as out-of school hours activities (eg Duke of Edinburgh's Award clubs); youth work undertaken in school hours with disengaged/disapplied young people; e2e work; counselling.
- Youth services should make a judgment as to which partnership outcomes it can reasonably count AND justify to Ofsted inspectors as legitimate, including the provision of appropriate evidence.

General services which reach young people (amongst others)

Services for young people

Youth work

Local Authority Youth Service

Youth work

Appendix A

Annex 1

Youth Work Values

- Young people choose to be involved, not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun.
- The work starts where young people are – with their view of the world and their interests.
- It seeks to go beyond where young people start, in particular by encouraging them to be critical and creative in their responses to their experience and the world around them and supporting their exploration of new ideas, interests and creative ability.
- It takes place because young people are young people, not because they have been labelled or categorised as deviant.
- It recognises, respects and is actively responsive to the wider networks of peers, communities and cultures which are important to young people.
- Through these networks it seeks to help young people achieve stronger relationships and collective identities – for example, as black people, women, men, disabled people, gay men or lesbians – and through the promotion of inclusivity, particularly for minority ethnic communities.
- It is concerned with how young people feel and not just with what they know and can do.
- It is concerned with facilitating and empowering the voice of young people.
- It is concerned with ensuring young people can influence the environment within which they live.
- It respects and values individual differences by supporting and strengthening young people's belief in themselves and their capacity to grow and change.
- It works with other agencies which contribute to young people's social and personal development.
- It complements and supports school and college-based education by encouraging and providing other opportunities for young people to achieve and fulfil their potential.

Taken from: *Transforming Youth Work*
Resourcing Excellent Youth Services, DfES Publications

References

1   Website access on www.odpm.gov.uk
2   *Data Collection Report* is available on The National Youth Agency website at www.nya.org.uk
3   *Local authority youth services – A framework for inspection*, Ofsted 2004.
4   *Local Youth Work Awards* is available on The NYA website at: www.nya.org.uk
5   Available on The NYA website at: www.nya.org.uk
6   *Resourcing Excellent Youth Services*, DfES Publications, 2002.

Frequently Asked Questions

(Recording and Accreditation in Youth Work)

General Questions/Issues

The new Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) don't identify the level of spending on youth services but this will have a bearing on our ability to reach all the benchmarks.

The four benchmarks (contact, participation, recorded and accredited outcomes) are only a small part of the range of management information that a local authority youth service is likely to need for both internal reporting and service management. BVPIs 221a and 221b focus attention on the outcomes of youth work for young people but will only be part of 'the story' for each local authority.

Any discussion about service output and outcomes for young people will be based on a 'value for money' equation which must take account of the amount of resources input. The focus on outcomes is unlikely to change and does provide the opportunity for services to be clear about what they are able to provide for a specified level of resource.

To do this effectively services must develop sound mechanisms for the collection and analysis of a range of management information. It is true that some services have made real progress in relation to MIS but for many this is part of a wider process of culture change needed to meet the demands of a modern youth service.

Is there any additional funding to help youth services achieve the benchmarks?

There is a clear commitment by government to the value of youth work in assisting young people's transitions to adulthood and a range of funding has been made available since the initial announcement of increased local authority budgets in 2003–04.

The benchmarks are part of a range of activity intended to raise the quality of youth work and additional funding is available in 2005–06 through the Transforming Youth Work Performance Improvement Fund (TYWPIF). TYWPIF will support a range of activity in relation to developing work around recording and accreditation and also contains provision for management information systems development.

Additionally the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has provided support for improving youth work through the Special Educational Needs Disability Act, Transforming Youth Work Management Development Programme and associated funds. Some funds have also been made available directly to the voluntary sector.

We would also encourage youth services to seek resources for youth work programmes from other funders such as, for example, Learning and Skills Council, Connexions Services, Youth Justice Board and European funding.

Is there any advice about how we reach agreement with voluntary sector colleagues on which outcomes we are each able to count towards youth service benchmarks?

The National Youth Agency (The NYA) advised youth services to specify this in an agreement with partners. Numbers of outcomes are likely to vary due to the significant differences nationwide

in funding and other resources granted to the voluntary sector and the different types of partnership in operation. Practice in relation to this varies across the country. In some cases the decision is based on a percentage calculation and in others is related to the role and function of the voluntary sector body that is funded. The agreement reached between local partners will be based on a judgment of what seems reasonable to both parties. It is important that the full value of the voluntary sector is recognised in this process and for local authority youth services to show how it adds value to the outcomes for young people through its partnership work with the voluntary sector.

Where the benchmarks refer to a 13 to 19 age range, is the upper age limit up to the 19th or 20th birthday?

In relation to these benchmarks the upper age limit is up to a young person's 20th birthday.

We also acknowledge the important work that youth services continue to undertake with young adults and young disabled people up to the age of 25 and would recommend that relevant management information is collected to inform local discussions about the volume and coverage of all youth work.

How do we find out the number of young people in our 13 to 19 population?

BVPI 221a and 221b advise authorities to use the Office of National Statistics (ONS) data information to calculate the 13 to 19 population figure. The ONS has provided The NYA with a list of every local authority's 13 to 19 population figure and this will be updated annually. This figure will be provided to each authority as part of the annual NYA audit cycle

We are aware that some local authorities use figures compiled locally when completing returns to The NYA as they are able to secure a much broader breakdown within the overall population figure. However, both Ofsted and Joint Area Review (JAR) inspections use ONS statistics as the basis for their calculations.

Our service works with a range of young people outside the 13 to 19 age range which is funded from youth service budgets. This will affect our ability to meet the benchmarks. What should we do?

Decisions regarding the age range of young

people that the youth service works with are made by local authority officers and members. However, it is important that as a national service we work towards a more level playing field in terms of reporting our work and would urge colleagues to use only the appropriate bands when returning results to The NYA, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, DfES etc.

It is, of course, vital that services maintain information on the full range of services they underwrite financially so that an accurate reflection of the volume and breadth can be used in discussion with elected members and other stakeholders.

There are some parts of the service where it is not as straightforward to identify progress towards the benchmarks, for instance in a counselling service or advice and information shop. How do we do this?

Before getting into the detail of this answer it is important to note that not all parts of a youth service will be able to contribute in the same way towards meeting the benchmarks. Whilst practice across the country varies, it is generally the case that managers have identified targets for different sections/establishments/areas dependant on the type and volume of work they can be expected to undertake.

In clarifying these issues we have taken advice from Youth Access, the national membership organisation for young people's information, advice, counselling and support services, who will be pleased to offer support to services and discuss issues further if that would be useful. Youth Access can be contacted at:
2 Taylor's Yard, 67 Alderbrook Road, London SW12 8AD. Tel: 020 8772 9900.
Website: www.youthaccess.org.uk

Consideration of the benchmarks in relation to these services is based on the *Quality Standards for Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support Services* manual and a copy of the definition of each type of service is reproduced as Appendix 2.

The issues in relation to **counselling** are challenging. At the forefront of current debate and research is strengthening the evidence base for counselling services and looking at appropriate ways to identify outcomes. Other key issues relate to confidentiality and data protection which most services resolve in

the early stages of systems development by introducing coded data entry and secure file storage.

Counsellors take careful notes of their meetings with young people and these are rightly kept entirely confidential. For the purposes of benchmarking it is sufficient to have a record that is coded or categorised in a way which enables the counsellor to know to whom it refers whilst maintaining the young person's anonymity.

Counselling services do vary. However, the following are examples of effective practice in relation to the benchmarks.

Contact: a contact can be counted when a young person drops in or a phone discussion takes place in which they are finding out about the service and deciding whether counselling is appropriate/may be able to help.

Participation: a young person attending their first session/appointment is a participant.

Recorded outcomes: there is a range of outcome tools in use within counselling; services using CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) or another nationally recognised outcome tool are automatically recording outcomes.

Where services are not using a nationally recognised outcome tool, then it is advisable for authorities to discuss with their counselling service the use of another appropriate and effective process for measuring the outcomes of their work with young people. Some counselling services will have concerns about the appropriateness of some of the nationally available tools in their settings. While some of these concerns may be legitimate, the authority should expect that a counselling service is operating to nationally recognised standards of practice, including having in place a counselling assessment process. (Information on counselling assessment is available on the Youth Access website.)

Accredited outcomes: it is unlikely that young people will gain accredited outcomes through work with a counselling service. However, a minority of services also run their own programmes to which young people in or leaving counselling have access. In this case the usual definitions relating to accredited outcomes should be used.

Definitions are also key in relation to young people's **information, advice and support services**. Some decisions will depend on the way the work is defined and the advice here is based on the Youth Access definitions (see Appendix 2).

It is worth mentioning here that youth work has shied away from 'giving advice' and in some places has adopted the term 'guidance'. However, the definitions used here do not refer to guidance as this is related to career/ employment and training issues. The description of advice work is based on helping young people to review their options and recommend ways forward, but decisions and choices are left to the young person. Clearly this fits with youth work practice and need not be a concern provided that decisions are firmly in the hands of young people.

Contact: can be counted at the level of giving information – this may happen on one or more occasions.

Participation: the young person can be counted as a participant where the discussion moves into advice work and the worker is resolving issues with them – this may or may not lead to further meetings or work depending on the nature of the enquiry.

Recorded outcomes: recording progress likely to be appropriate as a recorded outcome will only happen once the relationship has moved into advice work. Where a service is operating to national standards and the requirements of its Professional Indemnity Insurance policy, advice sessions must have written recordings. These may allow some partial evidence about the outcomes of the advice in that the agreed actions will be included in the recordings. However, there will need to be further evidence from the young person to assess whether the action(s) led to any specific change in learning or their circumstances. This is a complex issue and learning is evolving. Youth Access is currently piloting a potential tool to record the outcomes of advice work.

Accredited outcomes: are unlikely to be a result of information and advice work unless the organisation runs its own programmes to which young people are referred. In this case the usual definitions relating to accredited outcomes should be used.

Contact and Participation

How do we decide when a 'contact' becomes a 'participant'?

The criteria for participation are identified in BVPIs 221a and 221b as:

> *Extract from BVPI 221a and 221b – Participation In and Outcomes From Youth Work*
>
> **'Participation'** means:
>
> The youth worker has an ongoing relationship with the young person and
>
> the young person is involved with/attends youth work sessions/activities on a regular basis and is participating in a youth work curriculum in some way or
>
> the young person takes part in a 'concentrated experience' – a piece of focused youth work such as a residential event or project.

The decision about whether a young person is participating in youth work is essentially a matter of worker judgment and further definition cannot be given that will cover the variety of circumstances in which young people engage with the curriculum.

It is important that youth workers are supported to use their professional judgment. Only the worker 'on the ground' can judge the level of involvement and engagement a young person has with youth work.

Although national practice is not consistent, a recent (June 2005) snapshot of authorities revealed that two thirds of respondents currently rely on worker judgment and said they would not want this to be further defined by, for instance, a number of sessions and/or a length of time of attendance. However, it is important to seek a level of consistency in understanding and practice and regions may want to look at mechanisms for promoting discussion and sharing practice.

A separate question regarding advice, information and counselling services and the particular challenges in relation to contact, participation, recorded and accredited outcomes is included above.

Are we aiming for a benchmark of working with 40 per cent of the youth population or is the 15 per cent participant benchmark part of the 25 per cent contacts?

No, we are not aiming for 40 per cent. Our current aim is to make contact with at least 25 per cent of the 13 to 19 population and for 15 per cent of the 13 to 19 population to be participants in youth services.

The 15 per cent of participants recorded by youth services may have been previously included as contacts. Young people often become involved in youth work programmes by moving through a process which involves contact and development of a relationship before they move on to become full participants. However, if you also recruit young people directly onto longer term planned programmes they may become participants from the commencement of their work with you.

In BVPIs 221a and 221b the percentage of young people gaining a recorded or an accredited outcome is related to the percentage of young people *participating* in youth work.

Is this *participating* referring to the 15 per cent of the 13 to 19 population figure as per the original advice from the Minister or should we be using the actual percentage of young people participating in the youth service? (In which case it may be higher or lower than 15 per cent).

The figure to use is 15 per cent of the authority's 13 to 19 population as per the original advice. By using this figure the authority will get a picture of how it is performing against the benchmark. All the benchmarks are ultimately related to the size of the 13 to 19 population.

However, this is an important part of the authority's management information and we recommend that you also work out the actual percentage of young people gaining recorded or accredited outcomes against your actual participation figure. In this way you will get a picture of how well you are currently performing against the 60 per cent or 30 per cent recommended by the indicator.

For example:

a) In an authority with a 13 to 19 youth population of 22,000

	Benchmark	Actual Numbers	Percentage against benchmark	Percentage against actual
13 to 19 population		22,000		
25 per cent contact	5,500	4,258	19.35% $\frac{4,258 \times 100}{22,000}$	
15 per cent participation	3,300	2,976	13.53% $\frac{2,976 \times 100}{22,000}$	
Recorded outcomes (60 per cent)	1,980	1,444	43.76% $\frac{1,444 \times 100}{3,300}$	48.52% $\frac{1,444 \times 100}{2,976}$
Accredited outcomes (30 per cent)	990	719	21.79% $\frac{719 \times 100}{3,300}$	24.16% $\frac{719 \times 100}{2,976}$

In this case the figures that should be reported to ODPM and The NYA audit respectively will be:
BVPI 221a/recorded outcomes – 43.76 per cent and 1,444.
BVPI 221b/accredited outcomes – 21.79 per cent and 719.

Within this local authority when reporting both sets of figures to elected members and other stakeholders it would be important to have thought through the answers to a range of questions that would 'tell the story' for this youth service.

For example:

- We have made good/average/as expected progress overall since the first benchmarking exercise in November 2004. We are now only 5.65 per cent away from our contact benchmark and just 1.47 per cent short of the participation benchmark.

- When do we realistically think we will reach the benchmarks? What plans are in place to help staff make this a reality?

- We have further to go in relation to recorded outcomes; we have just over 16 per cent to make up which in real terms equates to 536 additional recordings of young people's progress. We have a range of measures in place for next year to support staff as we work towards this benchmark; we will, for example, provide guidance and training opportunities to discuss and exchange practice and a stronger emphasis on ensuring achievement is recognised through regular management processes.

- The percentage of accredited outcomes is pleasing/what we would expect/disappointing because … We have just over 8 per cent to make up to achieve the benchmark of 30 per cent accredited outcomes. In order to make up this difference over the next year we plan to …

- Does this represent good value for money in relation to our percentage of the education budget/expenditure on young people via the youth service?

- What are the resource implications of any plans presented? Is there a range of options or only one realistic choice?

b) In an authority with a 13 to 19 youth population of 55,000

	Benchmark	Actual Numbers	Percentage against benchmark	Percentage against actual
13 to 19 population		55,000		
25 per cent contact	13,750	10,900	19.81% $\frac{10,900 \times 100}{55,000}$	
15 per cent participation	8,250	9,750	17.73% $\frac{9,750 \times 100}{55,000}$	
Recorded outcomes (60 per cent)	4,950	5,722	69.36% $\frac{5,722 \times 100}{8,250}$	58.69% $\frac{5,722 \times 100}{9,750}$
Accredited outcomes (30 per cent)	2,475	2,008	24.34% $\frac{2,008 \times 100}{8,250}$	20.59% $\frac{2,008 \times 100}{9,750}$

In this case the figures that should be reported to ODPM and The NYA audit respectively will be:
BVPI 221a/recorded outcomes – 69.36 per cent and 5,722
BVPI 221b/accredited outcomes – 24.34 per cent and 2,008

For this authority, some of the questions to focus on would be, for example:

● We are making good progress but are not yet in contact with 25 per cent of the youth population. Why not? What is our plan to bring this in line over the next x years?

● The participation figure is a significant achievement. Whilst this is an excellent result for the authority, why do we think that is the case? Are there any useful lessons here that we can share with other authorities? Are we confident that staff are making appropriate decisions when deciding that a young person is a participant in the service? Given satisfactory responses to these questions, how will we celebrate this achievement?

● The service is doing very well in relation to recorded outcomes against the benchmark and this will be positive for the local authority in terms of its reporting to ODPM. However, we are just short of ensuring that 60 per cent of young people actually participating in the service are gaining recorded outcomes. What can we do to embed this practice in the service and ensure that staff understand the concept? Are we content with the quality of work that is being counted against this benchmark? What do we plan to do next year? What are the associated costs?

● The service is nearly meeting its benchmark for accredited outcomes (only 5.66 per cent below). However, the percentage of young people gaining an accredited outcome of those who are actually participating in the service is not so good with nearly 10 per cent improvement needed. What action will we be taking to ensure we at least meet the benchmark next year? Do we have appropriate plans in place to ensure that a higher percentage of young people participating in the service are enabled to gain accredited outcomes? What might be the costs attached to this?

Recorded and Accredited Outcomes

Is there a minimum amount of time for a recorded outcome?

No, there is not a prescribed amount of time. It will depend on the individual young person and their personal goals. It is a matter of professional judgment and is likely to vary significantly; the decision to record an outcome that will count towards service benchmarks can only be made by the worker in touch with the individual young person.

How do we know when to record a recorded outcome?

In simple terms, when you are satisfied as a worker that some significant learning has happened for a young person as a result of their involvement in youth work. The priority is that the circumstances for young people change for the better and that they recognise this.

Best practice requires that you make this decision with the young person as a result of a conversation in which you acknowledge/discuss the learning that has taken place and the benefit of this for the young person. The goal should be that the young person should be in control of the outcome – they should know they have made a decision, learnt, acted differently etc.

There are no set standards or levels for this – significant learning will be very individual. Practice within services will develop over time as staff and young people discuss their work.

Why does an individual young person only count once towards each benchmark per year?

By establishing this 'rule' stakeholders are able to identify whether a youth service is enabling an appropriate spread of young people to make recordable progress. It would not be sufficient for a service to be meeting its benchmark with regard to recorded and accredited outcomes if these opportunities were only available to a restricted group of young people.

Indeed, it is likely that as practice develops and workers become more accustomed to recording progress young people will have multiple records to evidence what they have achieved during their time with a service.

We think this 'rule' might encourage workers to only support young people to get one recorded and/or accredited outcome per year and then 'move on' to the next young person – how do we deal with this?

This is clearly not the intention of the 'one outcome rule' and although we have heard this fear on a number of occasions it has not been reported as fact.

We expect youth workers to act in the best interests of young people and support/enable them to progress as far as they can and want to go. For example, where a young person is working towards a Youth Achievement Award or Duke of Edinburgh's Award and has completed a section/unit this will count as an accredited outcome for them in the current financial year. Having completed one section/unit we would expect youth workers to encourage them to progress through the award to gain full certification even though the further sections/units will not count towards benchmarks for that year.

Clearly service managers would want to record all section/units gained so that they can report on the full volume of work that is being undertaken by their service annually.

Do peer recordings count?

The use of peer recording can be an acceptable and, in many cases, desirable part of the work. They can count towards evidence of a recorded outcome. However, it is recommended that a youth worker 'sign off' the recording. Young people may need to be trained to contribute to this process.

Is making a presentation at a conference likely to count as a recorded or accredited outcome? (Para A17 Ministers – Margaret Hodge – letter) and how does this equate with 'an entry on a student progress file' or 'participation in a particular event' (Para A10 Ministers letter)

A presentation could be either a recorded outcome or count towards an accredited outcome. A judgment will need to be made to determine the significance of the outcome for the individual young person and whether or not

they are working towards the completion of an accredited programme.

Can the 30 per cent of young people who gain an accredited outcome also be part of/included in the 60 per cent recorded outcome benchmark?

Yes, as youth work is a process that helps young people grow and develop it is likely that many of the young people who gain an accredited outcome will have been involved with your project for some time and so will have been part of a process that includes the recording of their progress. For many this will happen before they take part in an accredited programme or course.

In this way, the same young person may feature as both a recorded and accredited outcome in the same year.

However, it is also possible that you may recruit young people directly onto an accredited programme/course. They will become a participant on joining your programme and on successful completion an accredited outcome would be counted.

Each individual young person can only be counted once towards each benchmark in any one year.

We are tentatively exploring the desirability and feasibility of a local award. What other initiatives might we learn from and what is the current position?

Criteria have been developed which identify the process and conditions for recognition of a local award as an accredited outcome. These criteria will be effective from April 2006 – and are attached as the third paper in this publication *Local Youth Work Awards* (*Establishing the criteria for recognition of local youth work awards as recorded and accredited outcomes*).

Existing local award schemes cover a wide variety of programmes. Some will sit readily alongside other awards that can be counted towards the youth service benchmark for accredited outcomes. Others fall more easily into the category that is recorded outcomes and some local awards will not meet the criteria for either a recorded or an accredited outcome.

When deciding whether to go ahead with

establishing a local award there are a number of questions to be answered, for example:

- What do we want the award to do?
- Is there another award 'out there' which can already do this that we can adopt/adapt? There are many national awards that are able to be customised to provide an award with local identity that carries national recognition. *The National Framework of Awards in Non-Formal Educational Settings* (revised February 2005) published by The NYA provides useful information on a range of awards that can help in this area.
- Will this be in the best interests of young people?
- If it is an accredited programme how will we explain its worth to local employers/education providers?
- Do we have the staff time and other resources to put into development? This point requires careful consideration as a local award may seem a cheaper option but there are significant hidden costs in development, production and maintenance of the system. Using an existing award may be more cost effective and is likely to have greater currency for young people.

BVPI 221b talks about accredited awards being '*subject to either independent internal verification by the organisation making the award or be externally assessed by an awarding body*'. What does independent internal verification mean?

Some awards are delivered and assessed by the same organisation, for example the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or a local authority award. In this case the verification would need to be undertaken by a part of the organisation (individual/s) not involved in the delivery.

Do skills based awards count as accredited outcomes towards the benchmarks?

Purely skills-based awards, such as canoeing or orienteering, do not count by themselves as accredited outcomes. In order to count they need to have been gained as part of a youth work process.

For example, a local canoeing club's statistics for awards do not count towards performance indicators, but an award gained through a youth work group which does canoeing as part of its outdoor activity programme does count. In

this way, we can be content that the canoeing activity is run in line with the youth work values, goals and methods outlined in *REYS*. A canoeing certificate, therefore, gained via youth work activity would count as an accredited outcome provided that it is awarded by a recognised body, such as the British Canoeing Union.

How do I decide which award is the most relevant for the young people I am working with and fits best with the work we are doing?

These decisions will depend on a range of factors including the type of work you are undertaking, the young people you are working with, their needs and aspirations, the resources, support and experience available to you.

Attached as Appendix A is a list of some of the more common forms of accreditation in use – this is only a 'starter for ten' as the choice of available awards is vast. A booklet, entitled *National Framework of Awards in Non-Formal Educational Settings,* published by The NYA, has been produced by The Awards Network which you may find useful when looking for relevant accreditation. The awarding bodies which make up The Network will be pleased to discuss their awards with you (contact details are in the booklet) and a valuable source of information will be other colleagues within the service.

Will all well known national awards count as accredited outcomes?

The purpose of working towards accredited outcomes is that the award will have a focus on learning outcomes for young people. Gaining accredited outcomes is not the purpose of youth work – it is, for some, a means to the end of personal and social development. The process of youth work is dependent upon young people understanding what has happened and its significance to their future.

Some accredited outcomes will be based on awards where the learning outcomes are fixed/standard; others will work within a programme where they are negotiated. Key to gaining accredited outcomes is a process which involves discussion and agreement between worker and young person about the learning to be undertaken and the potential gains for the young person.

Where learning outcomes are not an integral part of the process (for example with Millennium

Volunteers the award is based on hours served) we would expect an authority to supplement this. In this way a young person can also gain an additional qualification.

General issues in relation to national awards:

1) Youth services may hold the licence to operate an award (for example, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award) in a local authority. If the award is delivered in a school group can sections gained be counted towards accredited outcome targets?

Where the award is delivered within identifiable youth work (see below) it can be counted. If however, delivery of the award is conducted by a teacher within the school curriculum and timetable and without youth service support then it is clearly not a youth service gain.

Practice in relation to this again varies across the country – some authorities do include the 'school-based' figures. Others only count direct youth service provision – this decision will remain with individual services.

Where the service is satisfied that the work fits within a youth work ethos and is 'within youth service influence and control' then it is justifiable to count the gains towards the accredited outcome benchmark. In judging whether the work is within your 'influence and control' you could consider, for example:

- How regular is contact with the youth service?
- Can/do you influence the quality of what takes place?
- Are teachers or other volunteers offered training alongside youth workers?
- Are you providing financial/other support to make this work possible (for example, staff employed by and seconded from the local authority youth service)?

2) If a youth club does not run a full award but delivers a section of the award to young people who are not yet award participants the young people may be given a certificate of prior learning and/or a 'credit note' that can be taken forward into the award if they decide to join later. Would this count as an accredited outcome?

If the certificate of prior learning/'credit note' is recognised as an award by the awarding body it can be counted as an accredited outcome. If this is not the case, the certificate can count as a recorded outcome when it is received and can count as an accredited outcome when it is validated as a national or local award.

3) Can successful completion of a section of an award by a young person (appropriately registered with the award organisation) be counted as an accredited outcome?

Yes, established guidance is that 'successful completion of one or more modules of a locally or nationally recognised award' does constitute an accredited outcome. A section or unit is a 'module'.

We are aware that not all services have chosen to operate in this way and this remains their decision. However, our advice would be that such services may be making it harder than necessary for themselves to meet benchmarks by requiring completion of a full award as evidence for an accredited outcome.

Appendix 1

Accredited Programmes

This is not a list of recommended courses/programmes but rather an indication of some of the more common forms of accreditation in use. Many more are available and equally applicable for use in youth work settings.

ASDAN
AQA
Changemakers
City & Guilds
CLAIT
Duke of Edinburgh's Award – Bronze
Duke of Edinburgh's Award – Silver
Duke of Edinburgh's Award – Gold
Fairbridge
First Aid Certificate
Food Hygiene
Getting Connected
Girlguiding UK
Health & Safety Certificate
Keystone
Local Youth Service Award
OCN
OCR
Prince's Trust
RCA
Scout Association
Sport or Skills Award(Accredited)
Trident
Weston Spirit
Youth Achievement Award – Bronze
Youth Achievement Award – Silver
Youth Achievement Award – Gold
Youth Achievement Award – Platinum
Youth Train

Appendix 2

Definitions – information, advice, counselling and personal support

Taken from 'Quality Standards for Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support Services'

The provision of any of the helping services listed below requires appropriately trained and supervised staff. Youth Access defines information, advice, counselling and personal support services as follows:

Information

The provision of systems and processes which make comprehensive, up-to-date and accessible information available to young people. There is no assessment or recommendation about the information's appropriateness, and decisions, choices and action are left with the young person. Information work can include signposting to other services or providing young people with resources to discover their own answers to questions and needs.

Advice

Advice is concerned with helping a young person to change or cope with practical issues and problems. It seeks to widen the young person's choices by providing accurate and relevant information about their rights, options and potential courses of action. The advice worker may identify and recommend ways forward, but decisions and choices are left to the young person. Any action agreed by the young person may be undertaken by, with, or on behalf of the young person.

Counselling

Counselling is an activity voluntarily entered into by a young person who wants to explore and understand issues in their lives which may be causing difficulty, pain and/or confusion. The boundaries of the relationship are identified and an explicit contract agreed between the young person and the counsellor. The aim is to assist the young person to achieve a greater understanding of themselves and their relationship to their world; to create a greater awareness of their personal resources and of their ability to affect and cope with their life.

Personal support

This is a general term which embraces a range of helping activities, including befriending and both individual and group work. The activities are frequently aimed at reducing a young person's sense of social and personal isolation and may provide help with practical needs such as independent living skills.

Local Youth Work Awards

(Establishing the criteria for recognition of local youth work awards as recorded and accredited outcomes)

Introduction

Good youth work has always included a variety of ways to recognise achievement and local awards have been a feature of this wider process for many years. Successful completion of a local award charts a significant learning journey for the young person involved and it is important that all such learning journeys are recognised and young people's achievement celebrated. Youth workers know that the progress possible for each individual will vary according to their starting points, motivation, support, type of programme and all sorts of external factors which change over time.

Existing local award schemes cover a wide variety of programmes. Some will sit readily alongside other awards that can be counted towards the youth service benchmark for accredited outcomes. Others fall more easily into the category that is recorded outcomes and some local awards will not meet the criteria for either a recorded or an accredited outcome.

This guidance is intended to assist youth workers and other providers in determining when a local youth service/organisation award can be counted as an accredited or recorded outcome.

Where the requirements of all the essential criteria (set out below) are met, successful completion of the local award by a young person can be counted towards meeting youth service benchmarks.

The benchmarks were first described in December 2003 in Margaret Hodge's letter and *Planning Guidance to Local Authority Youth Services for 2004–05* and further explanatory guidance offered by The National Youth Agency in its papers *Credit Where It's Due* and *Recording and Accreditation in Youth Work*, *Frequently Asked Questions* in June and October 2004.

The October 2004 versions of *Credit Where It's Due* and *Frequently Asked Questions* allow local awards, with the potential to be externally verified, to be counted as an accredited outcome. However, the documents also indicated that further work was in progress to define appropriate criteria for recognition of a local award as an accredited outcome. This work is now complete and seeks to ensure that young people gaining an award through this process have a worthwhile experience; can be confident that the award is of good quality and has the potential to gain recognition/credit for their achievement outside of youth work.

Background and context

The primary aim of youth work is the personal and social development of young people; the best of youth work will enhance life chances, promote a positive contribution to society and challenge the individual. It is, therefore, important for us to ensure that the systems and processes of youth work have meaning and influence in the wider world. The education and achievement of all young people feature high on the priority list of government and society alike and within this bigger picture youth workers are developing ways to record and recognise the progress that young people make as a result of their contact with the work.

It is important that youth work local awards have the potential to be recognised within future structures and the process of developing the criteria has sought to make them 'fit for purpose' whilst remaining mindful of developing national policy.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has recently consulted on *a framework for achievement: recognizing qualifications and skills in the 21st century*. This framework, together with the provisions of the 14–19 Education and Skills white paper, will make significant changes to the range and accessibility of educational pathways and qualifications for young people. In establishing these criteria for local awards the intention is to enable the awards to fit within future frameworks and so accrue as much credit as possible for young people.

The quality and scope of awards in use across the country varies hugely. Some provide recognition for a comprehensive process that is quality assured, well administered and gives young people a valuable opportunity to develop. Others are issued to mark progress made in considerably smaller steps and are not easily comparable with other forms of accreditation currently counted as accredited outcomes. The application of criteria will bring a measure of consistency, although it is recognised that this will also mean that some local awards which currently count as accredited outcomes will no longer count towards this performance indicator. By identifying the elements of good practice in relation to accredited outcomes youth services can 'benchmark' their programmes and highlight areas in which they might choose to develop their practice.

Recorded outcomes

Recorded outcomes are a vital part of the youth work process and provide important opportunities to record young people's progress and recognise achievement. Many local awards are currently used as one way of identifying a recorded outcome for young people and, provided that the award meets the relevant requirements, this is entirely appropriate. [The requirements for a recorded outcome are detailed in *Credit Where It's Due* guidance available on The NYA website: www.nya.org.uk].

There are some local awards that will not meet the requirements for either a recorded or an accredited outcome, for example where attendance is the key outcome. These certificates are often used to mark early developments and reward positive changes. They provide important recognition for young people who may have little experience of positive feedback and are unlikely to gain certificates/recognition through other routes.

Quality assurance

Responsibility for quality assurance will rest with the local authority/organisation which will determine whether their local award fits the criteria and is, therefore, acceptable as an accredited outcome. In some areas a regional structure may exist which can undertake a moderation function. The ultimate arbiter of quality however, will be Ofsted.

This process of self-assessment fits within developing practice nationally and clearly requires services/providers to interpret and make judgments whilst allowing scope for differentiation of provision. It relies on the

integrity of services/providers to remain vigilant in maintaining high standards despite any pressure to reach benchmark indicators.

Effective practice in relation to quality assurance is exemplified by a systematic process which routinely involves young people.

For example:

A service may have a process of peer inspection in which teams of staff (from all levels) and young people undertake reviews of provision on a rolling timetable. Results and subsequent action plans are presented to senior managers and summarised for council members. This focus on the quality of provision is a regular feature of meetings at a variety of levels, for example staff team meeting, area youth workers, young people's area forum, youth council/forum, biannual report to Members etc.

The local award can be brought within this process and examined as to its effectiveness and compliance with the established criteria.

The inclusion of recorded and accredited outcomes as Best Value Performance Indicators (221a and 221b) clearly signals the government's commitment to the role of youth services in enabling young people to meet their full potential. The process of ensuring the quality of local awards will enhance a service's quest for effective, appropriate and valuable learning opportunities for local young people.

The Criteria for Local Awards as Accredited Outcomes

The criteria are divided into ten sections over the following pages.

Where a word or phrase has been used that may need further explanation it has been included in a glossary of terms which can be found later in the document (see Appendix 1). It is advisable to have a look through the glossary before tackling the criteria and when you come across an unfamiliar expression, as it may clarify some of the terms used.

Each section contains the 'official' description of the criteria (in a box) and some additional explanatory notes underneath. Whilst the language of the 'official' description may seem unfamiliar to youth workers it is necessary to express the criteria in these terms to give us the best chance of fitting within future national frameworks for recognition of achievement. A composite list of the criteria appears as Appendix 2.

The term **award organisation** refers to the body responsible for the local award, for example the local authority youth service or voluntary organisation.

A **delivery centre** is a youth work outlet. That is a club, project, team or youth centre etc that is approved by the award organisation to deliver the local award.

1 Delivery centre registration

a) A system is in place to ensure that each provider of the local award (delivery centre) is registered with the local authority/award organisation and that minimum requirements to deliver the programme are met.

b) The local authority/award organisation has in place recognised quality assurance processes which include delivery centre registration, monitoring and review systems.

This section requires that the award organisation has a system/process in place to record centres that are approved to deliver the local award. The process for registration will be designed and administered by the award organisation, which should have a proper system for ensuring that the work undertaken with young people is of an appropriate quality and that standards are maintained over time.

It is clear that the minimum standards required will include all those contained in these criteria. However, local award organisations may have additional local requirements for registration.

Where an award organisation already has quality assurance procedures in place, it is likely that the ongoing monitoring of delivery centres could readily become part of the existing review process.

The centre registration system should also take note of legislative requirements for working with young people, for example child protection, health and safety, data protection etc.

For example:
In XYZ local authority a checklist of criteria is developed against which all potential delivery centres are measured. This list includes all criteria below, important local considerations and records information about people and processes at the delivery centre. An officer of the local authority is responsible for approving delivery centres.

This authority also has a quality assurance process which includes peer review and regular peer inspection. As part of the inspection process the checklist is re-examined at least every two years.

2 Staff induction and staff development

a) An induction process is in place for delivery centre staff responsible for the local award.

b) All delivery staff understand the minimum requirements of the local award in terms of running the programme and the assessment structure.

c) There are training, development and support systems in place for delivery staff.

d) Information about the local award is included in the induction process for all employees.

Staff induction and development are vital processes in ensuring provision of a quality service to young people. Therefore the embedding of the local award in these systems will help secure the required standards.

There are three specific requirements related to local award delivery staff and one general requirement to provide information about the award for all employees within their induction period.

3 Initial guidance/assessment of young people/learners

a) There is an initial discussion/assessment with the young person to establish the appropriateness of the local award in meeting their needs.

b) Deliverers should seek to ensure that young people understand the requirements of the local award.

c) The induction process for young people should clearly identify the support and guidance available to them as they progress through the programme.

d) Learning programmes are planned in relation to the learning outcomes of the individual, within the assessment framework of the award.

For many youth workers the notion of initial assessment will conjure up visions of large forms with lots of questions and spaces to fill in. However, whilst you will need to record the results of your discussions with individual young people, this assessment is based on what you know about a young person, the professional judgments you make about what they may need/want and the action you agree with them during these conversation/s. There may also be a place in this assessment for input from others, for example from parents, referring agencies, other professionals etc.

Some local awards will include a specific assessment process; others will rely on the content of the ongoing relationship between worker and young person as the basis for judgment on whether the award is appropriate for that individual.

Points b) and c) above are designed to encourage a full discussion [initial guidance] and to ensure that young people 'know what they are getting into', that this is the right programme for them and what sort of support they can expect once they are involved. The guidance and assessment may take place at the same time but may also be separate; it will depend on the individual young person and the type of local award you are working on.

In order to ground point d) in practice it is worth making a few statements for clarification:

● Each young person has different 'things' that they want/need from their contact with youth work.

● Youth workers help young people 'get what they need' through a process which is educationally based and is intended to support their personal and social development.

● Providing learning programmes is the essence of our everyday work and youth workers routinely put together activities/programmes that will enable young people to achieve the learning they need and so meet their learning outcomes (see below).

● Where this process fits within the framework for the local award you are able to recognise and accredit the young person's learning and achievement.

● In some cases the learning programme will be easy to identify and agree with a young person. In others it will be more 'hidden' although dealing with situations, issues, concerns that are regular features of good youth work.

For example:
1. *As you get to know a young person you discover that they have a very difficult relationship at home that causes them lots of problems and upset. They are under pressure from their parents to go to college but have already secured a job which is what they really want to do; communication has broken down. The young person agrees with you that they would like to work on this to try and improve the situation. You agree with them that you will work out ways to try*

and improve the situation and talk through some of the things you could look at/try out over the next few weeks – [designing the learning programme]. It is likely that over a period of time you will work on developing a range of skills and abilities with this young person. Where the recording of this development fits within the assessment framework for your local award you can recognise and accredit this important learning.

2. *A young person wants to prepare for making an application for a place on a local access course at college. You will discuss and agree the range of topics, issues to be covered (eg: presentation, filling forms, interview practice etc) – [designing the learning programme] and find ways to help them achieve each learning outcome.*

4 Learning outcomes and assessment strategy

a) Learning outcomes are identified within the framework of the curriculum/chosen activity/ programme.

b) The method of assessment is clear; this may be a prescribed process or indicative, allowing flexibility around evidence gathering and assessment.

To be clear that progress has been made by a young person it is important that learning outcomes are established which describe what they can achieve through participation in the local award.

The outcomes should be achievable within the youth work programme/activities and focus on what young people will gain from their participation.

For example:

1. *In a unit about 'Knowing myself' the learning outcomes might be that the young person will be able to:*

- Review their life so far.

- Be aware of their own qualities and changes they might want to make.

- Make and carry out plans for the future.

2. *A different sort of outcome might be – 'I want to get ready to apply for a place at college'. However, this will contain a number of subsidiary learning outcomes that it would be important to identify. The young person could cover a range of topics that may include:*

- Developing interview skills.

- Learning about the importance of appropriate personal presentation, for example knowledge and understanding of body language.

- Practising completing application forms and discussing/finding out the information needed etc.

The assessment process should be clear to both young people and delivery staff. It may be a process that is already set down which has to be closely followed [prescribed] or could be a description of a range of different and acceptable assessment methods/processes from which you can choose to suit the piece of work the young person is undertaking [indicative]. Key to this process is the clear recording of baseline (early) information so that any later statements about progress and/or development can be grounded.

For example:
The assessment process may take the form of relaxed (but planned) discussions with the young person during/after which you record their progress since starting the award (or since your last review); what they are learning from or 'getting out of' taking part and what's going to happen next.

Or on the other hand:
The assessment may be a series of structured discussions that require the youth worker to cover a set of questions/issues/points with a young person and record the process and responses on a standard form.

Flexibility is an important feature of all youth work and work towards accredited outcomes is no different. In fact, youth work often produces unexpected or unplanned learning for young people which may be just as valuable as the planned learning outcomes/objectives. An effective assessment and review process enables workers to negotiate necessary changes to a learning programme so that young people's actual progress/learning/achievement can be recognised and accredited.

5 Registration/recording involvement

a) Each young person is registered as a participant on the local award programme (prior to certification).

The youth work process rarely happens to a prescribed formula and registration processes will require a degree of flexibility and judgment by youth workers. Registration is essentially about recording involvement and this requirement seeks to ensure that every young person who undertakes a local award is known to the award organisation and registered as working towards their award. In this way the award organisation can monitor and review processes and progress; young people are fully 'signed up' to the process and certification can be tracked.

For some young people registration may happen at the beginning of the process, for others there will be a degree of retrospection.

For example:
A young person becomes involved in a youth work activity or programme where their interest has been captured purely by the activity/programme and work towards an award is not at this stage part of the agenda. As the young person makes progress and, perhaps, gains in confidence the youth worker can introduce the fact that this work can lead to an award. It would be at this point that registration would take place. Therefore, the registration may not happen before some activity has taken place but it should be in place before the bulk of the award activity is undertaken.

6 Young person's/learner's evidence of planning and review

a) Minimum requirements for planning and review are established by the local authority/award organisation.

This criterion is designed to ensure that an appropriate framework is in place, which will secure 'a good deal', or good process for young people. The award organisation will set out i) what is expected in relation to planning a young person's programme; ii) the parameters of an appropriate review process; and iii) how these can be recorded to provide evidence.

For example:

There may be a particular form to complete that identifies the plan agreed with each young person or this information could be part of the introduction to a video or drama production [evidence of planning].

An appropriate review process may say that each young person is entitled to an individual discussion/review of their progress at least twice during the course of their local award – this review should be recorded and a record signed/agreed on tape by the young person [evidence of review].

In essence, what are needed are flexible but systematic processes that fit within the youth work process rather than being 'bolted-on'. Workers are encouraged to have those important conversations with young people that include them in defining what they want to get out of time spent with the youth service and to later examine whether this has happened successfully.

7 Monitoring and progression

a) Appropriate monitoring systems are in place to ensure that young people's progress/achievements are identified.

b) Appropriate record keeping/documentation will be in place to record progress and achievement.

c) The local award can be mapped to level descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This may involve relating a single section/unit/award to the NQF or may need to identify how a collection of sections/units/awards relate to the NQF levels. *[This point is only essential if the local authority/award organisation is seeking to include their award in the NQF and the emerging Framework for Achievement and so gain formal qualifications and/or credits for young people].*

Points a) and b) require that the award organisation describes its minimum requirements for an effective system to monitor young people's progress and achievements whilst on the local award. And, through its quality assurance system, it will ensure that proper records are kept. It is through this process that young people and workers will identify when and how learning outcomes have been met. In some local awards young people are 'rewarded' for achievement at stages/intervals in their progress towards gaining the full award; good monitoring and recording systems will ensure that this process is effective and supports young people's progress.

For example:
The award organisation may require that young people have an opportunity to review their progress at monthly intervals during their involvement with the local award.

Some award organisations will provide documentation that is to be used for recording purposes and may also specify the 'shape/style' of record that a young person receives. Other awards will leave these decisions to local workers but will ensure that monitoring and recording does take place and that systems are robust and fit for purpose.

Point c) will be required where the award organisation wishes to include the award in the National Qualifications Framework or the emerging Framework for Achievement and so gain formal qualifications and/or credits for young people. All other requirements would also have to be met to enable inclusion in the NQF/FfA.

Further advice on the NQF or the FfA is available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Website: www.qca.org.uk

8

Gathering evidence

a) There are clear, accepted processes for collecting, assessing and evidencing achievement using a variety of methods. Examples include: drama and dance performance, portfolio building, log book completion, video production and witness statements.

b) Standard recording templates/checklists are in use to map evidence to desired learning outcomes. This enables flexibility in recording whilst ensuring that learning outcomes are met.

Gathering evidence is still a thorny issue for some youth workers who are concerned that this relies too heavily on people's ability to write well. However, not all evidence needs to be written; not everyone has to do the writing; it's okay for workers to write things down with/for young people and young people are usually really pleased to 'have something to show' for all their hard work. Young people understand the need to provide evidence but may not have been enabled to gather these resources in the same way as their peers for various reasons. By helping young people overcome these barriers you will be doing them a great service as prospective employers, colleges and society in general look for this evidence, however much you may wish that were not the case. Planning, experience and sharing information will support the development of effective evidence gathering and award organisations should be clear with delivery centres what is acceptable and how assessment processes may include reviewing the evidence.

Point b) requires that a mechanism is in place to record basic details to confirm that young people have met the desired learning outcomes. Beyond this there is a range of flexibility to meet the needs of different awards and systems.

9

Internal checking and monitoring

a) A clear role is established for 'internal verifiers'. (Except where there is a system of external assessment). The internal verifiers must be independent of the assessment and delivery procedures.

A verifier is responsible for checking standards and 'approving' the allocation of a local award. Practice in relation to this varies considerably and there is a range of acceptable processes.

For example:
the allocation/approval may be made:

- *within the delivery centre;*

- *within the delivery centre and moderated by an external verifier;*

- *via recommendation by the delivery centre and confirmed by a further process;*

- *at a central point within the service/organisation; or*

- *at a regional moderation event, etc.*

Where award organisations decide that internal verification is appropriate, this must be undertaken by a person who is independent and not involved in the delivery and assessment processes.

Before approving a delivery centre, the award organisation should ensure that all the systems and processes needed for the award are in place.

10 Notional learning time

a) The award will have an indication of the learning time involved and will have a minimum of ten hours. This may take the form of recommended attendance hours, or notional learning time. This may be within an indicative range.

A local award may be made up of ten hours or more of learning time, which can be sub-divided into smaller 'units' if required. Notional learning time encompasses all activity designed to fulfil the learning outcomes/objectives.

This is **not** a measure of time spent in general youth work sessions but a notional measure of the time a young person, on average, might be expected to take to complete all work towards the learning outcomes. Young people will not, in practice, all learn at the same pace and so the actual time taken may vary considerably. The actual time taken will vary according to the method of delivery but the notional learning time will not.

For example:
Completing a unit or module about 'Handling relationships' may have a notional learning time of ten hours. One young person may take just eight hours to produce all the evidence required for completion of the learning outcomes in this unit; another young person may take 20 hours to produce appropriate evidence.

The learning time should include all of the learning activities which it is expected the young person will be involved in to achieve the learning outcomes including, for example:

- Discussion based work.

- Practical work in other places.

- 'Formal' learning (including classes, training sessions, coaching, seminars and tutorials).

- Relevant parts of a residential programme.

- Practice, gaining, applying and refining skills to reach the desired level of competence.

- Planning.

- Counselling and mentoring that are integral to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

- Assessment.

Any prior skill or knowledge needed by the young person should not be included in an estimate of learning time.

Notional learning time carries within it the implication that this is 'supervised' time, that is where it is possible to confirm that the time counted towards the award is spent in pursuit of the learning outcome/objective. Therefore, where learning time is 'elsewhere' this needs to be agreed as part of the young person's work, should be reviewed afterwards and the time spent away 'witnessed' or evidenced.

[Where all other requirements are met, this may enable the local award to be included in the Framework for Achievement. The minimum of ten hours learning time may enable young people's achievement to count towards credit accumulation within the FfA. Credits can be at entry level, level 1 or beyond; credit value would be awarded based on the learning time and level/'degree of difficulty' of work needed to achieve the learning outcomes. Clarification on this aspect of local awards will develop over time as the FfA comes into general use; The NYA will issue further advice on how to map local awards to the FfA at an appropriate time.]

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms
Local Youth Work Awards
(Establishing the criteria for recognition of local youth work awards as recorded and accredited outcomes)

Term Used	Meaning and References
Accreditation process	The process of recognising learning achievement that leads to an accredited outcome.
Accredited outcome	For a full definition and examples please refer to *Credit Where It's Due* and *Frequently Asked Questions* published by The National Youth Agency, available at www.nya.org.uk
Assessment	The process of making judgments about the extent to which a young person's work meets the assessment criteria for an award, qualification or unit, or part of a unit.

Assessment Criteria	The requirements that young people need to meet in order to achieve success (or a given grade/level) in an award, qualification, unit or part of a unit.
	
	A description of what the young person is expected to achieve, in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been met.
	
	For example:
	In a unit about 'Coping with Feelings' one of the four learning outcomes is 'To recognise feelings generated by prejudice and discrimination'. To meet this learning outcome a young person would need to provide evidence against a range of assessment criteria, for example:
	1. Identify and record two situations in which you have experienced or observed different forms of discrimination and describe:
	    a) Your feelings/their feelings
	    b) How you behaved/how they behaved
	    c) How you could have responded to the situation differently?

Assessor	The person who assesses a young person's work; in many cases for a local award this will be a youth worker.

Benchmarks	A level of quality which can be used as a standard when comparing other things.

Benchmarks are often linked to targets, performance indicators and performance measures. |
| **Competence** | The ability to carry out activities to the standards required. |
| **Credit** | Credit is a standardised measure of educational attainment; an award to recognise achievement.

Current descriptions of credit require that each unit of credit is a minimum of ten hours learning time alongside successful completion of a number of learning outcomes.

Some awards will be complete in one unit; others will require a number of related units to gain the award. |
| **Evidence** | Evidence is the material the young person produces which shows that learning has taken place. In general, it can come from anywhere in their life and experience as well as being generated through activities specifically designed as part of the local award/learning process. It can be generated naturally (things that a learner does in their everyday life) or is generated by completing a specific assignment or task, designed for the purpose.

Evidence can be provided in a range of formats: drama and dance performance, written materials such as portfolios and log books, video production, witness statements etc. |
Framework for Achievement	The Framework for Achievement is currently being constructed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Learning and Skills Council and will include a wide range of learning achievements. It will be developed between 2006 – 2010 and will include qualifications, awards and units of learning which will confer credit at different levels on the learners.
Independent Assessment	Assessment of candidates' work that is carried out by assessors who do not have a vested interest in the outcome, that is those not involved in the original delivery or assessment processes.
Individual Learning Plan	A record of the progress, achievements and learning goals of individual young people.
Induction	An initial introduction to processes, systems, quality, standards and assessment for the local award, at the beginning or at an appropriate time.
Initial Discussion/ Assessment	This assessment is part of the youth work process and is based on what you know about a young person, the professional judgments you make about what they may need/want and the action you agree with them.

Internal Verifier	An individual appointed by the centre to ensure accurate and consistent standards of assessment, both between assessors operating within a centre and between centres offering the same award.
Internal Moderation	A process undertaken by a providing organisation in which assessment practices and decisions are regularly sampled and evaluated and findings are acted upon to ensure consistency and fairness.
LSC – Learning and Skills Council	The body established in 2001 which is responsible, through 47 local offices, for the planning and funding of all post 16 education and training other than in universities – this includes provision and funding in further education and work-based learning.
Learning Experience	In youth work terms a learning experience can be the result of a wide range of events, activities and experiences. These may be events, activities and experiences specifically provided by youth work (the programme or curriculum) or may be the result of 'processing' learning (with a young person) that has happened elsewhere. Processing learning is the basis of many youth work conversations with young people; those discussions which often highlight action and consequence and help young people get to grips with their life experiences. For a learning experience to be meaningful it should result in an outcome that is fully understood by the young person and is sustained over time.
Learning Objective	In youth work terms a learning objective is a statement of what it is intended a young person will achieve through a specific activity or process. Learning objectives may be a subset of a learning outcome. That is, a young person may have to meet a number of learning objectives (go through a number of stages/processes) to reach their desired learning outcome.
Learning Outcome	Learning outcomes are statements of what it is expected a young person will be able to do; what they will know and understand or what new behaviours and attitudes they will display as a result of a learning experience.
NQF – National Qualifications Framework	National Qualifications Framework – The framework used by the regulatory authorities to position qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Notional Learning Time	Notional learning time includes all activity, supervised by a youth worker and designed to fulfil the learning outcomes. It is not simply a measure/record of attendance at youth work 'sessions'. It is an informed estimate of the time a young person on average might reasonably take to complete a unit of credit towards a local award or the whole award. It includes all of the learning needed to achieve the learning outcomes.
Portfolio	A collection, in any format, of evidence of a young person's learning and achievement, for example, an e-portfolio; a folder of work; log book etc.

Progression	Movement through a series of learning phases or levels; each new phase or level usually builds on the one before.
QCA – Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority – The statutory regulatory authority for external qualifications in England.
Recorded Outcome	For a full definition and examples please refer to *Credit Where It's Due* and *Frequently Asked Questions*.
Registration	Registration is making a record, with the award organisation, that a young person is a participant on the local award. For some young people registration may happen at the beginning of the process, for others there will be a degree of retrospection.
Sideways Progression	This is an important and relevant notion of progression where a young person may be succeeding at a particular level and continues to work in this way.
Witness Statement	A witness statement is a signed and dated recording made of an important event, a significant conversation, an observation etc. which illustrates and describes what has taken place. In the case of work towards a local award, the statement is likely to describe where, when and how a young person has made progress or has successfully completed a learning outcome.

Appendix 2

Local Youth Work Awards

(Establishing the criteria for recognition of local youth work awards as recorded and accredited outcomes)

1 Delivery centre registration

a) A system is in place to ensure that each provider of the local award (delivery centre) is registered with the local authority/award organisation and that minimum requirements to deliver the programme are met.

b) The local authority/award organisation has in place recognised quality assurance processes which include delivery centre registration, monitoring and review systems.

2 Staff induction and staff development

a) An induction process is in place for delivery centre staff responsible for the local award.

b) All delivery staff understand the minimum requirements of the local award in terms of running the programme and the assessment structure.

c) There are training, development and support systems in place for delivery staff.

d) Information about the local award is included in the induction process for all employees.

3 Initial guidance/assessment of young people/learners

a) There is an initial discussion/assessment with the young person to establish the appropriateness of the local award in meeting their needs.

b) Deliverers should seek to ensure that young people understand the requirements of the local award.

c) The induction process for young people should clearly identify the support and guidance available to them as they progress through the programme.

d) Learning programmes are planned in relation to the learning outcomes of the individual, within the assessment framework of the award.

4 Learning outcomes and assessment strategy

a) Learning outcomes are identified within the framework of the curriculum/chosen activity/programme.

b) The method of assessment is clear; this may be a prescribed process or indicative, allowing flexibility around evidence gathering and assessment.

5 Registration/recording involvement

a) Each young person is registered as a participant on the local award programme (prior to certification).

6 Young person's/learner's evidence of planning and review

a) Minimum requirements for planning and review are established by the local authority/award organisation.

7 Monitoring and progression

a) Appropriate monitoring systems are in place to ensure that young people's progress/achievements are identified.

b) Appropriate record keeping/documentation will be in place to record progress and achievement.

c) The local award can be mapped to level descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This may involve relating a single section/unit/award to the NQF or you may need to identify how a collection of sections/units/awards relate to the NQF levels. [This point is only essential if the Local Authority/Award Organisation is seeking to include their award in the NQF and the emerging Framework for Achievement and so gain credit for young people].

8 Gathering evidence

a) There are clear, accepted processes for collecting, assessing and evidencing achievement using a variety of methods. Examples include: drama and dance performance, portfolio building, log book completion, video production and witness statements.

b) Standard recording templates/checklists are in use to map evidence to desired learning outcomes. This enables flexibility in recording whilst ensuring that learning outcomes are met.

9 Internal checking and monitoring

a) A clear role is established for 'internal verifiers'. (Except where there is a system of external assessment). The internal verifiers must be independent of the assessment and delivery procedures

10 Notional learning time

a) The award will have an indication of the learning time involved and will have a minimum of ten hours. This may take the form of recommended attendance hours, or notional learning time. This may be within an indicative range.

Recording Young People's Progress and Accreditation in Youth Work

Credit Where It's Due

Frequently Asked Questions

Local Youth Work Awards

Wendy Flint

This is the third edition of *Credit Where It's Due* and the accompanying *Frequently Asked Questions*, initially developed in June 2004 by The National Youth Agency in discussion with the Department for Education and Skills and revised in October 2004 following field trials. In this revision the guidance has been brought in line with the Best Value Performance Indicators and the *Frequently Asked Questions* considerably expanded.

The NYA will be pleased to receive comments on the guidance and the implementation process at local level and will respond as the processes roll out.

The National Youth Agency