Labour Party
Building a Statutory Youth Service

30 November 2018

London Youth
47-49 Pitfield Street
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About this consultation

On 30th November 2018, the Labour Party closed consultation on its policy proposal for **Building a Statutory Youth Service**.

Aims

With this consultation, the Labour Party aims to create a policy:

- To create a National Strategy for Youth Work and a Charter underpinned by law, which will define what sufficient levels will be; and
- To create a sustainable funding model to support the delivery of a statutory youth service.

Labour is committed to creating a quality youth service for all young people. We believe this service should be protected in statute, recognising the important role universal youth work plays in supporting young people to realise their potential.

To ensure that this provision is tailored to the needs of each community, every local authority would be required to establish a local youth service partnership with young people, parents, professionals and councillors. This local partnership would be responsible for providing strategic leadership, assessing provision in that area and publishing a local youth strategy.

Labour also believes that it should be the responsibility of the Secretary of State to promote and secure sufficient youth services, working together with local authorities and voluntary bodies. To support this ambition, a Labour Government would mandate a national body with dedicated ring fenced funding to oversee youth service provision across England. This body would work with all local youth service partnerships, review local youth strategies, monitor and distribute funding, and advise on professional and service standards.

The National Charter for Youth Work (draft)

All young people will be entitled to inclusive, open access youth services.

The purposes of the youth service would be to:

- Ensure the personal and social development of young people;
- Secure active involvement by young people in relevant activities and local decision-making;
- Assist young people to realise their full potential and play a full part in the community; and
- Enable young people to live successfully in a modern digitally connected global community.

The functions of the youth service would be to:

- Ensure the active voluntary participation of young people in the specification, governance, delivery and scrutiny of services;
- Enable and encourage young people to set up and run their own activities and organisations;
- Secure the provision of appropriate information, advice and counselling;
• Enable and encourage young people to be involved in the community, including in community service and projects to promote active citizenship;
• Assist young people to make the most of education and employment opportunities;
• Maintain equal opportunities as under the Equalities Act 2015;
• Promote international visits and a greater understanding of cultural diversity;
• Promote the health and well-being of young people and their healthy lifestyles;
• Promote positive activities and deter criminal or antisocial behavior;
• Promote creativity and participation in arts and culture;
• Promote participation in sport;
• Promote participation in democracy; and
• Co-operate with other public services in the interests of young people.

About this response

This response is on behalf of London Youth and supported by our members and associate members.

About London Youth

London Youth is a federation of over 400 community youth organisations in London. We are a youth charity on a mission to improve the lives of young people in London, challenging them to become the best they can. Young people need opportunities outside school to have fun with their friends, to learn new skills, to make a positive change in their communities and to shape the city they live in.

We deliver a broad range of meaningful benefits to our members, including funded opportunities, training and professional development, specialist member networks on issues affecting young people, Quality Mark accreditation, a policy and influencing voice, and research that evidences the needs of the young people and the youth sector. With members and partners, we deliver sports, arts, and youth social action programmes, as well as the Talent Match London employability programme to young people in London.

We also run two residential centres, Hindleap Warren in East Sussex and Woodrow High House in Buckinghamshire, that help young people develop their skills and confidence through specialist outdoor education.

We directly develop the confidence, resilience and relationship skills of over 27,000 children and young people each year through our programmes and reach tens of thousands more through our membership network.

London Youth believes it is vital to connect those who make decisions with young people and the over 400 youth organisations in our membership. We are able to facilitate:
• Visits to community youth organisations;
• Consultation on specific issues or programmes with young people and youth professionals;
• Dissemination of opportunities or information to community youth organisations; and
• Young people and youth professionals attending and speaking at events.
Our response

Key messages

London Youth strongly supports a commitment to put the youth sector on a statutory basis. Access to free, high-quality youth provision for all, to complement the education system, is essential to supporting young people’s physical, mental, and social wellbeing and supporting their transition to adulthood.

Following the Labour Party’s announcement of a policy of statutory youth services, we have encouraged all political parties to follow suit. We argue that good youth provision should be a public service that young people have a right to and can access irrespective of which party is in government. We believe that young people should be able to rely on a high quality youth work system with the same confidence that they can rely on the healthcare or education systems.

Young people in London have been negatively affected by the drastic cuts to youth provision funding over the last decade. We consider it vital for there to be a significant reinvestment in youth work that returns baseline funding to pre-2010 levels and seeks to address a decade of under-investment with additional resources.

The importance of voluntary and community youth organisations to the youth sector in London cannot be understated. Since 2011/12, youth provision in London has increasingly been delivered by the voluntary and community sector due to reductions of local authority’s youth service budgets of at least £39 million per year. We consider that community youth organisations should be strongly involved in the proposed local partnerships and will also be vital to delivering services commissioned by these partnerships.

Building trusted relationships is the basis for youth work and for all professionals working with young people. For example, many young people’s lack of trust in the police remains a constant tension in tackling youth violence. Youth workers are in a unique position to build trust with young people because, unlike many of the services and professionals young people interact with, their only purpose is the wellbeing and development of the young person. This trust allows youth workers to support young people and to effectively signpost them to specialist services or targeted programmes. Trusted relationships take time to develop and cannot be replaced with multiple, lower quality relationships. We consider that these relationships are best developed by high quality, open access youth provision.

We are strongly supportive of a commitment to put the youth sector on a statutory basis. We acknowledge that this policy is in its initial stages of development and note that the current version has not fully developed several important areas about the structure and role of the proposed statutory youth service. We welcome further clarification of these issues and encourage the Labour Party to consider further targeted consultation, particularly with young people and community youth organisations, once this has been achieved. We welcome further engagement

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1 Unison (2016) *A Future at Risk: Cuts in youth services.*
3 All Party Parliamentary Group for Children (2014) *“It’s All about Trust”: Building good relationships between children and the police.*
and would be willing to facilitate this process with our diverse membership of over 400 community youth organisations in London.

A) National Charter for Youth Work

What do you think should be the role of a statutory youth service?

London Youth supports a strong youth sector on a statutory basis that ensures universal provision, clear responsibility for delivery, and appropriate and protected resources. Youth work and community youth organisations are a vital part of the social infrastructure of London and the UK, and this fact should be recognised in law.

Note on terminology

Generally, the youth sector primarily understands the term ‘youth service’ to refer to youth work delivered directly by a local authority. ‘Youth provision’, ‘youth work’, or ‘the youth sector’ is understood to refer to all youth work delivered in an area, including local authority youth services, public service mutual organisations, youth organisations in the voluntary and community sector, and social enterprises. In this response, we have followed the above distinctions.

Role

The role of the proposed statutory youth service must be to ensure that every single young person has access to high quality youth provision in their local community that is suitable to their needs. This should provide young people with opportunities outside the home and school to go somewhere they can be safe, have fun, learn, develop, and get the support they need. Youth provision should support young people’s mental, physical, and social wellbeing, and support their transition to adulthood. This provision should be built around a basis of open access youth work, supplemented by specialist targeted youth work where additional needs or opportunities are identified.

To ensure this, the statutory youth service’s role must be to ensure a strong and sustainable youth sector that is able to deliver for young people.

We consider it vital that high quality youth provision should be acknowledged as a core responsibility of central and local government, and something that young people are able to rely on a high quality youth work system with the same confidence that they can rely on the healthcare or education systems. We consider that long term and cross party support is essential to this, as is political independence of the statutory youth service.

Structure

Regarding the structure of the proposed statutory youth service, we consider it is essential that the voluntary and community sector plays a central role. We consider that youth professionals and organisations from voluntary and community sector should be represented in the proposed local partnerships and the national body. Local authorities will play an important role in the proposed local partnerships, but should not be solely in control of them. The make-up of these
partnerships should reflect the current realities of youth provision, which is increasingly delivered by the voluntary and community sector.

We consider that a central principle should be to encourage a diverse youth offer in local areas, while maintaining universal provision. There is the risk of large, national delivery organisations being commissioned to deliver all local or regional provision in order to satisfy national targets. We argue that this would be negative for young people’s outcomes, reducing the opportunities available to them and meaning provision that is less grounded in the needs of the local young people and their communities.

We consider that a mixed model of delivery must be considered that allows room for a variety of different options, dependent on local needs. A diverse youth sector in local areas should be considered a central goal of the statutory youth service.

Delivery

We consider that positive youth work ensures that all young Londoners grow up healthy, able to express themselves, navigate a fulfilling career, and make a positive contribution in their communities.

Our research has found that youth organisations are successful at strengthening communities by:

- Creating connections for young people and the community;
- Giving young people a sense of belonging and ownership over the local area;
- Being places of physical safety;
- Allowing young people to recognise and celebrate difference and cultural identity;
- Developing young people’s skills and confidence for community involvement; and
- Being known and trusted within the community.  

Funding

We consider it vital that funding provided for the proposed youth service be protected in such a way that the damaging cycle of cuts ends. Providing or ensuring high quality provision for all young people should be considered a core responsibility of central and local government that is not able to be removed or reduced without legislative change.

We argue strongly that the statutory youth service requires significant commitment of funding. This should be at a minimum baseline comparable with pre-2010 levels of funding and should also include additional investment to counter negative impacts on young people and youth organisations caused by an almost decade of under-investment.

It is vital that place-based, grass-roots community youth organisations that have the strongest relationships with young people should be a beneficiary of increased funding through the commissioning of services. When commissioning services, the local partnerships should consider funding that enables relationships and networks to be developed and sustained and protects high

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quality spaces for young people. This will require commissioners in the proposed statutory youth service to fund core costs of delivery organisations and to invest in capacity building, outreach, and partnership building activities, rather than a narrow focus on programmatic funding.

**Relationship with other statutory services**

We consider that a statutory youth service must have strong and structural relationships with other statutory services and the public sector, and means for these relationships to be fostered in local areas. Our members report frustration over the current lack of clear channels for working with statutory services also working with young people.

For example, members report occasional issues building relationships with the education sector to support the same groups of young people or to gain access to facilities. This is particularly concerning in the light of the problem of increasing exclusions negatively affecting the most vulnerable young people, which our members have deep concerns about. Members report similar problems of insufficient communication channels with health and police services, particularly over referrals to or from these services.

We note that the issue highlighted above relates to the lack of formal mechanisms for partnerships and that there have been many valuable relationships that individuals or organisations have developed. One such positive example is a partnership that our Talent Match Croydon employability programme has created with the London Borough of Croydon to share spaces and relationships.

What amendments, if any, should be made to the principles outlined in the draft National Charter for Youth Work?

We support a statutory National Charter for Youth Work. We strongly support that all young people would be entitled to inclusive, open access youth services.

We consider that the draft purposes of the proposed youth service need further refinement. The last two purposes, in particular, could be merged. Missing from the purposes is the role of youth work in supporting young people, particularly with their physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

We would also encourage the Labour Party to emphasise the role of building trusted relationships as a central purpose of youth work. Building trusted relationships is the basis for youth work and for all professionals working with young people. For example, many young people’s lack of trust in the police remains a constant tension in tackling youth violence. Youth workers are in a unique position to build trust with young people because, unlike many of the services and professionals young people interact with, their only purpose is the wellbeing and development of the young.

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person. This trust allows youth workers to support young people and to effectively signpost them to specialist services or targeted programmes.

Regarding the proposed functions of the youth service, we:

- Consider that allowing young people young people to have fun to be a core function. This has a practical advantage, in that young people are more likely to take advantage of enjoyable services, but also young people’s right to play should be considered a core principle of youth work and of the proposed statutory youth service;
- Support the focus on youth social action and leadership;
- Consider that the role of youth work in signposting young people to other services should be made more explicit;
- Consider the promotion of international visits to be an excellent opportunity for some young people, but not necessarily a core function of youth work;
- Consider it important to promote forms of physical activity other than sport;
- Consider it necessary to emphasise the role that youth organisations play in supporting young people’s mental health and wellbeing, particularly in the context of reduced public services; and
- Consider it importance to include youth work’s role in addressing social inequalities, such as deep racial disparities in youth employability or access to opportunities for young people from deprived backgrounds.

There are some limitations in listing the functions of youth work, which is very dependent on context. We suggest a better approach would be to list the young people-centred goals of a statutory youth service.

B) Labour’s vision

What amendments, if any, should be made to Labour’s vision for delivering a statutory youth service?

London Youth generally supports Labour’s aim for a statutory youth service. However, the overall structure, particularly around delivery and the role of the voluntary and community sector, require further detail. We acknowledge this is the early stages of policy development and are happy to engage with later stages of this process.

London Youth supports the creation of a National Strategy for Youth Work. London Youth has long called for a coordinated approach to young people and youth work at a central government level. We consider this should include a dedicated ministerial portfolio with responsibility for young people. This youth affairs minister would seek to prioritise youth policy, publish a national youth strategy, and coordinate youth policy and programmes between central government departments (particularly the Department for Digital, Communications, Media & Sport; the Department for Education; the Department of Health & Social Care; the Department of Work & Pensions; the Home Office; the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government; and the Ministry of Justice). We consider that this youth affairs portfolio should sit within the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Education, rather than the Secretary of State for Digital, Communications, Media & Sport.
Our assumptions

To ensure that there are no misunderstandings in our response, we have compiled our assumptions about the structure of a statutory youth service as described in Labour’s proposed policy:

- Local partnerships will be established in local authority areas. These will be convened by local authorities and will have representation from young people, parents, and youth professionals. These partnerships will be primarily commissioning bodies, to which end they will assess local provision, publish local strategy, and distribute funding provided by the national body. It is not clear:
  - What relationship these partnerships will have to delivery;
  - How much flexibility there will be to local needs; and
  - What the role of the voluntary and community sector is.

- A national body, possibly similar in form to the National Citizen Service (NCS) Trust, will be established to coordinate the local partnerships. This body will be answerable to the Secretary of State, have protected funding that it will distribute to the local partnerships, as well as approving their local strategies and advising on standards. It is not clear:
  - What the size or structure of funding is;
  - How much control the national body will have over local partnerships and their strategies;
  - What the role is for regional partnerships or coordination, such as at a pan-London level; and
  - How this national body will be structured or to which minister or government department it will be responsible, or if an existing organisation would fulfil this role.

Questions not answered by the policy

We consider that there are several questions not yet answered by the proposed policy, which we have compiled below. We encourage the Labour Party to address these in further development of the policy and would welcome further engagement on these issues:

- Will the local partnerships have responsibility for delivery, including directly employing youth workers or delivering services and programmes to young people? Or, will they be responsible for commissioning services, according to local needs and the local youth strategy?
- What will the relationship between local authorities and the proposed local partnerships be?
- What is the role of youth organisations in the voluntary and community sector, which currently deliver the majority of youth provision in London?
- What is the role of regional coordination? How would coordination between local partnerships operate at a pan-London level?
- How would funding be allocated among local partnerships? For example, would there be a national formula per young person?
C) Service delivery

At what age should statutory youth services be available to young people?

London Youth considers that young people should be able to access statutory youth services between the ages of 8 and 25 years old.

For the younger section of this cohort (8 to 12 year olds), the space to play is an important role that youth work can provide. Our members report concern about the increased vulnerability of younger people, particularly around violence and mental health.

For the middle section of this cohort (11 to 18 years old), the priority should be supporting young people’s transition into secondary schools, providing support and positive opportunities while they are there, and enabling a successful transition to adulthood, such as with support into higher or further education or employment.

For the older section of this cohort (18 to 25 year olds), our members report greater challenges in successfully transitioning to adulthood and the need for greater support to an older age. This is largely connected London’s very high cost of living, particularly for housing, and issues of youth unemployment and underemployment. For example, in a report based on our Talent Match London employability programme for 16 to 24 year olds we estimated that there may be up to 480,000 hidden young people in the UK, who are not in education, employment or training and are also not accessing any statutory support.\(^8\)

A vital principle should be to avoid sharp drop-offs in provision due to age. A common issue that we hear from our members is frustration over overly-strict programme or funding eligibility that leaves young people who are slightly too old or slightly too young without support that they would benefit from.

What should the balance be between open access and targeted youth work?

London Youth considers both open access and targeted youth provision as vital parts of youth work and of a statutory youth service. We consider that open access youth work should be prioritised over targeted programmes and should constitute the majority of provision.

Open access youth work provides the greatest opportunity for early intervention or prevention for any issues that young people may experience. Young people with access to a trusted and knowledgeable youth professional are more likely to recognise problems they are experiencing, be supported with them, and be signposted to specialist services before a crisis is reached. For example, the connection between community youth organisations delivering open access youth work and preventing or reducing serious youth violence is often made.\(^9\) Greater investment in this sort of prevention would reduce the demand for expensive, specialist programmes that take over after a young person has reached a crisis point in mental health or violence.

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8 London Youth (2017) *Hidden in Plain Sight: Young Londoners unemployed yet unsupported.*

Open access youth work, while flexible, is not unstructured and often includes a programme of activities and development. Research has demonstrated that open access youth work in England can have an observable and positive effect on enhancing friendships, increasing confidence, improving sense of wellbeing, increasing resilience, developing mutuality (in positive interpersonal relationships), and reducing risky behaviours.\(^\text{10}\)

Open access youth work has particularly suffered under almost a decade of austerity for the youth sector.\(^\text{11}\) At least 81 youth centres in London have shut, our members report reducing their hours of operation, and funding is increasingly focused on programmes aimed at the greatest need. Significant reinvestment is needed in open access provision to ensure that it returns to sufficient levels and is available to all young people in their local communities.

Targeted provision builds off the relationships established in open access youth work. The latter often feeds directly into the former through referrals or as informal outreach. Without the foundation of trusted relationships developed in open access youth work, targeted programmes are increasingly difficult to deliver.

A focus on open access provision with high-quality activities and facilities would counter the negative narrative that youth work is only for the most ‘at-risk’ young people. High-quality offers benefits for young people from all backgrounds to improve their mental, physical, and social wellbeing and make successful transitions to adulthood. Accessing opportunities and support should be considered a right of all young people in London, rather than only for the most vulnerable. Youth organisations play a powerful role in developing strong and cohesive communities not just for the young people who attend, but also for all members of the wider community.\(^\text{12}\)

Organisations delivering open access youth work should be provided with funding for core costs to support the development of relationships and high-quality spaces. Targeted programmes will not suit all organisations or communities. Those organisations with specialisations in certain areas should be able to apply for specific funding (through the statutory youth service framework or other funders) for targeted programmes. However, this should be based on genuine need and ability to deliver on that need, rather than programmatic funding filling in for a lack of funding sources for open access youth work.

### What role should national programmes such as NCS, voluntary sector, community and faith groups, businesses, and commissioning play in supporting statutory youth services?

London Youth considers that the part of Labour’s proposed policy that most requires further development is around the role of the voluntary and community sector and faith groups in delivering youth provision and supporting young people.

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\(^{11}\) London Youth (2017) *Young People’s Capital of the World? Understanding and responding to young Londoner’s changing needs.*

\(^{12}\) London Youth (2018) *“A Space of Our Own” – The role and value of youth organisations in strengthening communities.*
We consider it vital that youth professionals and organisations from the voluntary and community sector play a central role in the proposed local partnerships and in advising the national body. Community youth organisations are often established and operated by local communities or have deep, long-standing, and trusted relationships with them. These relationships represent a valuable asset in London’s social infrastructure. Likewise, expertise and knowledge about local needs and existing provision will be invaluable to the proposed local partnerships.

Since 2011/12, local authority-delivered youth services have declined dramatically. As a result, the voluntary and community sector has delivered a much larger proportion of youth provision. This provision is funded through a mix of central government and local authority grants, and private donations. It is unrealistic to expect to

Any local partnership would need to build and maintain strong relationships. There is a role for infrastructure organisations that can build capacity and broker partnership for the local partnerships. Infrastructure organisations, such as London Youth across London and the Young People’s Foundations (YPF) model in boroughs in northwest London, are ideally placed for this role.

The role of commissioning depends largely on our previous stated question about the nature of delivery and the relationship between the local partnerships and the national body in the proposed statutory youth service. We consider that commissioning will be a central role of the proposed local partnerships. We consider a core measure of success of commissioned services would be whether funding reaches place-based, grass-roots community youth organisations that have the strongest relationships with young people. We contend that youth organisations in the voluntary and community sector will be central to delivering universal youth provision.

When commissioning services, the local partnerships should consider funding that enables relationships and networks to be developed and sustained and protects high quality spaces for young people. This will require commissioners in the proposed statutory youth service to fund core costs of delivery organisations and to invest in capacity building, outreach, and partnership building activities, rather than a narrow focus on programmatic funding.

We consider NCS to be a valuable and effective programme. However, it is limited in the group that it works with (16-17 year olds) and the amount of time that it operates (3 weeks per year). It is vital for young people of all ages to be able to access youth provision all-year round. The viability of national programmes should be tested regularly against how they are meeting current needs.

We consider that partnerships with the commercial sector can play a positive role in supporting high quality youth provision. London Youth has had a positive experience of partnerships with employers through our Talent Match London employability programme. For example, we have partnered with Movement to Work, a coalition of employers providing work placements for young people, to secure high quality work placements that lead to positive and sustained career pathways. Our members report that the most valuable form of partnership with businesses is those that are sustained over a longer term and reflective of the needs of young people and of youth organisations. For example, commitment by local businesses to work with youth

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organisations on employability and work experience over a period of years or reliable funding for programmes.

D) Youth voice

How can we ensure that young people’s voices are at the centre of a new statutory youth service?

We strongly support a youth-led approach to a statutory youth service. Young people should be meaningfully consulted on and involved in the decisions that affect them. It is good practice for young people to be encouraged to take decisions about their own development and plans for the future.

Youth involvement is an important part of our Quality Mark, quality accreditation system for youth organisations. London Youth operates Dare London, a youth advisory board who support and guide the work of London Youth.

We would strongly recommend that Labour include plans for youth advisory boards for both the national body and for all local partnerships. Young people on an advisory board should be able to attend and take an active role in events attended by management or governance teams. For example, members of a youth advisory board should attend board meetings, planning days, celebration events, and annual general meetings.

The quality of the local youth strategies produced by local partnerships will depend largely on how effectively young people are involved in these processes. Young people should be involved in developing these strategies from as early as possible. Youth advisory boards can play an important role in this process, but it is vital to represent the views of young people more widely in an area. Without genuine commitment to involving young people and giving them responsibility for the decisions that affect them, there is a risk of tokenistic representation that would not serve the interests of young people or the statutory youth service.

When involving young people in the proposed statutory youth service, London Youth recommends adopting a youth work approach. This must include proper safeguarding processes and should also consider and support the broader needs of the young people being involved. Where it is appropriate, young people should be paid for their involvement.
What support does the youth sector require to re-establish the workforce capacity needed to deliver a statutory youth service? For example:

- Should we introduce a legally ‘protected title’ for youth worker?
- Should we introduce a statutory national register for youth workers?

In introducing a protected title or national register for youth workers, London Youth considers there to be a fundamental tension between the desire for recognition and support for professionalisation among many in the youth sector, and the risk of placing undue barriers in the way of volunteers and youth workers who do not have formal or validated qualifications. We recommend that this aspect of the proposed policy requires more consultation with youth organisations once the proposed structure has been made clear. This consultation should include a focus on smaller community youth organisations.

London Youth notes the importance of recognising the professional skill of the youth work profession and of increasing the esteem in which it is held, but has concerns about unintended consequences. Although we do not have figures for qualifications among our members, we consider that a large proportion of youth professionals hold validated professional qualifications of some sort. The value of experience and of ability to relate to young people should also not be underestimated. Equally, training or formal qualifications are not an automatic guarantor of quality youth work. As in all sectors, those who succeed academically and gain qualifications may be deficient in other important competencies, such as the necessary experience or interpersonal skills to relate with young people.

We consider that professional development is one aspect of a quality framework and, while undeniably important, not enough to ensure high quality youth provision on its own. We recommend the Labour Party should consider how a quality framework, designed around the desired outcomes for young people, could be included in the proposed statutory youth service. London Youth demonstrates its commitment to high quality youth work by delivering the Quality Mark quality accreditation for our members. This quality accreditation system is co-delivered with UK Youth, has been accredited by City & Guilds, and is recognised by local authorities and funders. It is delivered at three levels and focuses on the policies, procedures, and opportunities in the areas of involving young people; health and safety; outcomes for young people; partnerships; safeguarding; leadership and management; diversity, equality and inclusion; new improvements; and staff and volunteers.

To be effective, a protected title and national register would need to be accompanied by a programme of support for training and capacity development in the youth sector. A common concern from our members is about limited opportunities for professional development and the lack of apprenticeships and graduation schemes to plan for the next generation of youth professionals.

Over the last decade, there has been a decline in the number of validated youth work qualifications available. According to the National Youth Agency (NYA), in 2017 there were 29 educational institutions offering 41 validated youth work qualifications, compared to more than 60
courses at 40 institutions in 2007/08. From our members, London Youth has experienced a strong and consistent desire for training and professional qualifications. There is huge demand for training and development opportunities that London Youth offers. For example, recent Mental Health First Aid training was booked out within hours of being offered.

In the long or medium term, there may be a case for greater professional recognition.

What role should The Joint Negotiating Committee and other nationally agreed pay scales and conditions play in supporting a statutory youth service?

We consider that this question requires greater clarity on the role of delivery in the proposed statutory youth service. As with the above question, we recommend further targeted consultation with the youth sector once details about the structure are more established.

The youth sector in London is diverse and Joint Negotiating Committee pay scales are not universal throughout it. Recognising the skilled and challenging nature of their work, we generally support higher pay and improved conditions for youth professionals.

F) Evaluation

What is the most effective way to evidence the outcomes and impact of youth work?

London Youth supports greater alignment and simplification of outcome and impact measurement. The youth sector currently has to satisfy a large number of outcome and impact measurement criteria for different stakeholders. This can create a large burden on youth organisations and significant duplication of effort.

There is a very clear role for the government in setting the evidence agenda and of being an enabler and facilitator of good evidence. The Department for Digital, Communications, Media, & Sport’s has done some work in this area, but could provide more leadership on the issue. There are various pieces of work undertaken throughout the youth sector to improve evidence frameworks. Where possible, existing frameworks should be built upon, instead of starting again from the beginning. Examples of existing frameworks include the Local Government Association (LGA)’s framework on outcomes for young people and the Centre for Youth Impact’s work on outcomes.

We note that we do not consider it credible to have one evidence framework for all types of youth work. It is particularly unrealistic to expect open access and targeted youth provision to have the same evaluation methods. There are particular challenges around evidencing the impact of the former. Open access youth work is likely to be one of multiple services that young people are accessing and there are significant challenges for youth organisations in longitudinally measuring holistic changes, to which they contribute. It is also important to note the cumulative nature of longer term relationships and that the value of these cannot be simply replaced by multiple short-

term interventions. For this reason, we consider that evaluation must seek to measure the quality of youth work provision beyond quantity targets or economic impact measurement.

As a principle, evaluation should seek to reduce the time burden on youth organisations, youth professionals, and young people. For example, we have heard that NCS requires a large investment of time on evaluation for the young people who participate. While evaluation is very important, time that youth professionals spend on paperwork is time that they do not spend on other aspects of their work.

The Labour Party should seek to understand the other stakeholders in the youth sector, particularly current funders and commissioners of provision. Even with the commitment of significant statutory funding, there will still be the need and opportunity for other funders. These funders will have their own evidence requirements. There should be an effort to engage with these stakeholders, understand their requirements, and support alignment.