

Aiming High for Young People



So what's happening?

Back in 2007 the Government launched a 10-year plan for people like you. Its full title was 'Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities'.



Basically it was a bunch of promises about improving your lives wherever and whenever: at home, in the classroom and, in particular, when you've got a bit of time on your hands and are looking for something to do that would be good for you and your community.

So it was about helping you to make the most of your free time. About having fun and safe places to go and interesting things to do.

We'll be spending £679 million between 2008 and 2011 to deliver on our promises.

And that's on top of the money we've already earmarked for things like 'extended schools' – that's councils setting up activities in and around schools for the evenings, weekends and during holidays.

Then there's the plan to make sure you can get involved in education or training courses up to the age of 18 or beyond so you've got a better chance of getting a decent job.



But it's not just promises, it's not just about money and it's not just up to the Government. It's about making a difference on the streets and some of that really is down to you.

We've already started doing our bit and in the past year lots of real things have happened that will not only help you but help you to improve your communities. Take a look and see the story so far and decide how you would like to get involved.

Promise: rebalancing the public narrative about young people

Essentially this is about giving young people a better public image so that the good stuff you do gets a louder shout than some of the bad stuff that makes the headlines.

Among the things we've got planned are:

Local youth celebration events

We're looking at setting up events across the country that will show how young people have made a positive impact on their neighbourhoods.

To test out the theory, young people and local authorities have been putting together events in Bournemouth, Bradford, Brent, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Hillingdon, Oxfordshire, Poole, Suffolk and Warrington. These were held during February 2009 and we're now looking at ways we can continue with this kind of event.

Youth Week

We're working up plans to showcase nationwide the best things that young people do through a coordinated, week long programme of events. It's based on what happens in other countries, such as Australia where more than a quarter of a million young people take part in nearly 1,800 events, attracting a massive amount of media coverage.



Its looking likely to be in Summer 2009 if it happens over here.

Youth Media Fund

There's £8 million to give teenagers the chance to say something positive about themselves by creating their own projects in film, print, TV, radio or online. So far more than 9,500 young people have been given grants of between £500 and £40,000.

If you fancy it, take a look at www.media-box.co.uk

Promise: empowering young people

We want to give you a say in the sort of services, events and places to go for young people in your area.



Some of the ideas are:

Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds

Given £173 million for youth events and projects how would you spend it? That's what this is all about. Councils have been told the money is there but they have to give young people control of it by letting them decide what to spend it on. It's not new – it's been going on for two years and the signs so far are that it's working: these decision-making panels have been set up by councils so that they really listen to what young people are saying.

National volunteering programme

It's the biggest-ever youth action programme with plenty of chances to get stuck in – £75 million is creating half a million places. Run by an outfit called **v** there are teams wherever you live in England.

Think volunteering is boring and uncool? Think again. One of the programmes involves putting together a fashion collection from old clothing to highlight the fact UK households throw away

900,000 bits of clothing each year when much of it could be re-used.

Take a look at www.wearev.com

More leaders of tomorrow

It makes sense to know a bit more about 'the system', if you are to get involved. So next year there'll be a chance to 'shadow' Government Ministers, spending time with them to find out how politics happens. You can do the same in your own neighbourhoods with local leaders.

What's more a new national body for youth leadership is going to provide more opportunities for young people to demonstrate their leadership skills. This includes the local and national shadowing schemes and a fellowship programme. The body will be a virtual organisation – it won't have an office building – so that most of its £2million a year budget will go straight to young people. Those involved should be getting their feet under the virtual table during 2009.

Promise: increasing the number of places to go

We will give young people in every part of the country more places to go and quality things to do. It's what you, your parents and your communities are asking for.



So over the next 10 years there will be new and improved places set up in every part of the country.

And right up front it's been stressed that whatever projects are agreed they must be in the places – and open at the times – that are best for young people. That includes neighbourhoods and times, Friday and Saturday nights for instance, when you tell us there is not much to do.

There's £190 million to spend through a programme called **myplace** which will only agree to ideas that have involved young people from the start and will continue to involve them once schemes are up and running.

Councils, too, have also been told they must take into account the needs of young people when making their plans for the future, such as town centre redevelopments or new schools.

Extra money towards this is coming from unused bank accounts – not yours but from bank and building society accounts that haven't been used for years.



Promise: removing barriers and supporting access

One of the really crucial things about all of this is that every young person should be able to get a piece of the action.



That means helping those who may not be able to afford it, haven't got the transport, don't have any support or even can't really be bothered. Often these are people from the poorest communities. It also means helping those who can't help themselves through disability.

So an extra £221 million is being spent to help them with projects such as out-of-hours activities at schools throughout the year – not just in school holidays.

Not having the cash to get to places is a big problem for some people so in a few areas a test is going on with young people being given up to £40 a month to help them get involved. If it works it could be offered in other areas next year.

And those neighbourhoods where young people are most likely to get into trouble are being given extra help.

For starters, in Lambeth the X-It Programme has brought together a bunch of youngsters who often skip school or are into gang culture. It includes time away in the Lake District and talking together about guns, drugs and anything else that gets their lives into a mess. It's been pretty successful – three quarters of them stayed out of trouble while the course was going on.

Many young people have told us that this sort of thing won't work if you don't feel safe when you get to these new places. So we're tackling that through an action plan that makes sure those in charge know how to deal with, for example, bullying. And that includes 'cyber bullying' over the net or by text.



Do it 4 Real is a project that has seen 45,000 youngsters stay in summer holiday camps around the country and try out adventurous and creative things to do.

It's open to 10 to 16-year-olds from every area and background. The idea is that mixing with other people of your own age away from home is a fun and safe way to learn new things, make friends and experience a different way of life.

You don't have to pay the full cost and there's extra help up for grabs if your family receives child tax credit or free school meals, or gets help through the Looked after Children scheme.

Kim is 16 and lives with foster parents on the Wirral. She has been to two camps, one with outdoor stuff like off-road biking and canoeing, and another called Make Me A Star about putting on a show.

She said: "I made real friends there. I'm still in touch with some of the people I met. We email each other and I talk to them on MSN. They live miles away from me. That's the best thing about the camps. There are people from all over the country but you all come together and make friends 'cos you're all in the same boat."



Promise: improving capacity and quality of services

We want to ensure young people get the best quality services from the right people and that everyone is working together to make it happen.



This means people like those running health, justice, sport and school services should all be up to speed when it comes to getting things done.

And that doesn't just mean government departments and local councils.

We know that a lot of interesting and useful work is down to volunteer and charity groups – what we call 'the third sector'.

So a new Youth Sector Development Fund (YSDF) is being set up to hand out £100 million to these groups over the next three years to help them grow.

Part of that money will go to young people who've got an idea – but not the cash – for a way of helping other young people from their community.

Some is going on learning schemes for those who just don't get on in school, and there's also help for schemes that speak up for the needs of disabled youngsters.

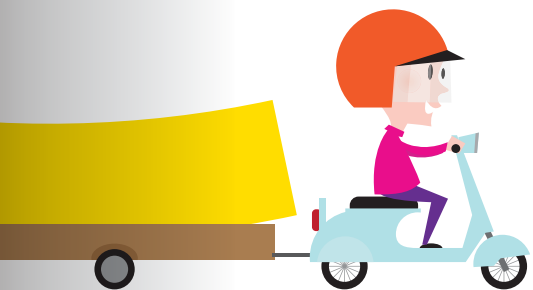
One of the groups that has already got its hands on cash from the YSDF is Kids Company in South London.

It's an organisation that helps youngsters whose parents aren't around or can't care for them properly. They do everything from taking them to the dentist and buying new shoes to supporting them through hard times as well as fun activities.

Now they'll be able to do even more thanks to the extra money.

Promise: supporting youth workers to do their best for young people

Having the right adults working with young people is crucial and the plan is to make sure they've got the right stuff to deal with whatever comes their way.



So we're looking at getting in more people you can relate to and making sure that those who are there to help and advise you have had all the training they need. This includes making sure other young people are in the mix, so we're going to make sure that there are different and easier ways of getting training and qualifications; for example a young person who is doing voluntary youth work can turn it into a full-time career if they want.

One of the other things we'd like to do is see if we can give each young person who's struggling to stay on track a mentor to help them through the difficult times.

We're also looking to make sure doctors and nurses know the best way to deal with young people, and that youth workers know enough about health matters to dish out sound advice.



And that's not the end of the story

All this is just a taste
of what's going on.

There's loads happening that will make a real difference on the streets – but only if you get stuck in too.

Fancy it? Take a look at www.direct.gov.uk/getinvolved to check out what's going on down your way.

We're not saying we've got all the answers. So if something's not happening that you think ought to be, then you need to give us a shout.

Email: AdvisoryGroup.AIMINGHIGH@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Write:
Activities and Engagement Division
DCSF, Area E4b, Moorfoot S1 4PQ





This leaflet is only a general guide and is not a full statement of the law. We have made every effort to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct in March 2009.

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