



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
Brighton and Hove Youth Support Service

Dates of inspection: 10-14 January 2005

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Introduction

Name of local authority:	Brighton and Hove
Name of chief officer:	David Hawker
Name and address of department in which the service is based:	Children's and Family Services Carden Youth Wing 376 Carden Ave Brighton BN1 8LJ
Name of service:	Brighton and Hove Youth Support Service
Name of head of service:	Nigel Jenner
Reporting inspector:	Jon Bowman
Dates of inspection:	10-14 January 2005

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) conducts inspections of local authority youth services for young people aged up to 16 under section 38 of the Education Act 1997. For young people aged 16 to 19 the inspection remit is provided by section 61(2) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Brighton and Hove is a vibrant south of England seaside city with approximately 19,000 13 to 19 year olds. Just over 10% of young people are from black and minority ethnic groups. Brighton and Hove has higher than average levels of mental and physical health problems, cases of suicide, and levels of substance misuse. Brighton and Hove City Council Youth Support Service is located within Children Families and Schools Directorate. The service is working towards integration with health services under a pilot Children's Trust and works primarily with 13 to 19 year olds. The core local authority funding base for the youth service is low at £730,000 in 2004/05, with a net budget per young person aged 13 to 19 of just £46.81. Provision is targeted within geographical areas of need and a significant proportion of the work is provided in partnership with the voluntary and community sector. Levels of external funding are high, an additional £1,471,100 supplementing the local authority allocation. The service is led by a head of service, a small operational management team and delivered by approximately 45 part-time and 31 full-time workers. The percentage of young people aged 13 to 19 participating in youth work is reported as 18.7%, against a national target of 15%.

During the inspection week, inspectors carried out direct observation of a sample of youth work sessions in a range of settings, held discussions with members of staff, elected members and partners of the service, and reviewed a sample of service documentation. Inspectors allocated time to the evaluation of work identified by the service as being representative of particularly good practice

Part A: Summary of the report

Main findings

Effectiveness and value for money

Brighton and Hove city council provides an adequate youth service in which there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The service's use of resources and the quality of its work with young people represent satisfactory value for money.

Strengths

The local authority has established a clear strategic direction for the youth support service. Many young people are achieving well and making good progress. In the good practice, young people respond well to programmes that are effectively matched to their interests. Good opportunities exist for accrediting young people's progress through local and national awards. There is good use of specialist staff and expertise. A very high level of external funding is successfully matched against service priorities. Service managers have a good understanding of local needs and know well the issues that the service is facing. Partnership work enhances the breadth of programmes available to young people.

Weaknesses

Young people are insufficiently involved in the evaluation, assessment and recording of their progress and are too little engaged in the management of the service or in democratic processes. Curriculum co-ordination is weak. The work with young people takes too little account of the need to promote equality and diversity. The level of resources made available to the youth service by the local authority is insufficient. The lack of capacity within the management team leads to key initiatives not being fully implemented. Monitoring of the performance of work secured through the voluntary sector is weak.

Key aspect inspection grades

	Key aspect	Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	3
	Quality of youth work practice	3
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	3
3	Strategic and operational leadership and management	3

The table above shows overall grades about provision. Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale: Very Good (1), Good (2), Adequate (3) and Inadequate (4).

Recommendations

The council should:

- involve young people thoroughly in service development at all levels and in planning and reviewing their learning
- remedy deficiencies in curriculum co-ordination
- actively promote equality and diversity in youth work programmes
- review the resources available to the youth service from the local authority
- increase the capacity of the senior management team
- improve quality assurance arrangements, in particular in relation to work secured through the voluntary sector work.

Part B: Commentary on the key aspects

Key Aspect 1: Standards of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice

1. Young people's achievements are adequate overall. In the best sessions, young people achieve well and make good progress in the acquisition of practical and interpersonal skills. Where achievement is high, young people are able to describe what they have learned, and are enthusiastic and well motivated. Many young people are developing self-confidence and self-esteem through their engagement in the service. At the Crew Club, young people gained confidence and developed greater self-awareness through performing arts and developing the club newsletter. At Patcham Youth Centre, young people learn about healthy eating through cooking and broaden their understanding of other health related issues such as smoking. Learning is well supported by good opportunities for accreditation through local and national awards.
 2. Young people frequently contribute to the community through sports leadership and other forms of voluntary work. In the best examples of this work, they play an active part in the planning and delivery of activity programmes. At 'Positive Futures', for example, young people benefit from taking responsibility for developing and delivering programmes for others in outdoor education and the arts. At Hove Young Men's Christian Association, senior members very effectively led a basketball session developing the sporting skills of other young people.
 3. The majority of unsatisfactory achievement was seen in open-access youth clubs where young people's involvement in the evaluation, assessment and recording of their progress is underdeveloped. Young people are insufficiently involved in the running of these programmes and in these instances young people are unable to take responsibility and show initiative.
 4. The quality of youth work practice is adequate. Youth workers are clear about the educational principles of the work. They establish and maintain positive relationships with young people. In the few instances of inappropriate behaviour seen, workers effectively challenged young people. In the good practice, youth workers devised purposeful, relevant and stimulating activities that were well-paced and matched to the interests of the young people. In the weaker practice, sessions were poorly planned, evaluation lacked rigour, and programmes were insufficiently stimulating. In these instances, workers failed to implement the curriculum effectively or engage the interest of young people.
 5. Most youth workers have a sound knowledge of the local area and the needs of the young people with whom they work. In targeted provision, workers make good use of local networks and referral procedures to reach young people in its priority groups. In some settings, the numbers of young people involved are low and workers lack effective strategies to attract those not currently using the service. In the good practice, workers provided a good balance of direction, guidance and support and enable young people to take increasing responsibility. Youth workers make good use of local knowledge to signpost young people to additional sources of information and opportunities for progression.
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Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

6. The quality of curriculum and resources is adequate. The service offers a satisfactory range of activities and programmes, which include sports, music, arts, outdoor education, health education and volunteering. Sports and performing arts in particular enjoy a high profile. Information and communication technology (ICT), political and cultural education are, however, underdeveloped in the day-to-day youth work programmes. The service has effectively supported access to the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme for young people with learning difficulties and/or special needs. Information and advice is integrated into some activity programmes, as well as being made available to young people through detached work, mobile provision and drop-in centres.
7. The service has recently reviewed its curriculum and the scope of the new curriculum framework is comprehensive and ambitious. It is, however, still in draft form and is not yet entirely consistent with the service's stated plans and priorities, and not yet fully informed by local needs. Co-ordination of the curriculum is weak. Senior workers have been given the responsibility to oversee, promote and develop specific aspects of the curriculum across the service, but there is no clear rationale underpinning these responsibilities, which have developed historically rather than in response to the needs of the service. The resources, support, training and guidance which workers receive to support curriculum implementation are inconsistent.
8. The service has produced well-intentioned and ambitious policies to promote anti-sexist, anti-racist and anti-homophobic approaches and to ensure that mainstream provision embraces diversity. Not all staff are aware of these policies or of their specific responsibilities in relation to them. The integration of equality and diversity issues into the curriculum is underdeveloped.
9. The service has a strong core of skilled and experienced full-time staff who are deployed effectively to lead much of the provision. The service is, however, facing significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, which have an impact on the consistency and continuity of provision and the speed with which the service's aspirations can be realised. A high percentage of part-time staff are newly-appointed and are as yet unqualified. The service makes good use of staff with specialist expertise to enrich and extend the opportunities available to young people.
10. Premises are generally bright, warm and welcoming and, although somewhat shabby, are adequately maintained. Five of the nine principal centres are fully accessible for young people with restricted mobility. The service has undertaken an accessibility audit and has plans to remedy some deficiencies in the premises that are not accessible. The service is making adequate progress in relation to complying with Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001 (SENDA). The quality of resources to support learning is variable. For example, while there are some good resources to support sports programmes, resources to support ICT are barely adequate. The information available to young people is generally up-to-date and covers a reasonable range of topics. Some Connexions access points are poorly resourced.
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Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management

11. A clear strategic direction for the youth support service has been established. The service's ambitions reflect well those of the local authority and the department, although not all staff fully understand the strategic direction of the service. The low level of resources made available to the youth service by the local authority is insufficient for the service to be able to carry out the full range of its responsibilities effectively. The service has been successful in securing a very high level of external funding and is in the upper quartile of services nationally in this respect.
12. The service has designed a range of good strategies to promote inclusion, and issues of equality and diversity feature in its three-year plan. However, there has so far been too little proactive, co-ordinated and effective action taken on these issues. The service works successfully with a number of partners to enhance the breadth of programmes available to young people. However, there are weaknesses in the service's monitoring of the performance of voluntary sector groups that they fund. Current arrangements between Connexions and the service are satisfactory.
13. The service is supported by a corporate health and safety policy and although full-time workers have received training and guidance has been issued to staff, some staff lack awareness of health and safety issues. In relation to child protection issues, staff understand their role and responsibilities.
14. Service managers have a good understanding of local needs. Although the service identifies its priority groups clearly, it does not make provision for them all. Provision is characterised by the ability of the service to raise external funding and the service does not effectively use needs assessment at the service-wide level to plan provision.
15. Day-to-day management of the service has failed to drive through key initiatives. The service has recently refined the roles of middle managers to place the service in a better position to manage all of its responsibilities. Morale amongst staff is good and they feel well supported by current arrangements, including supervision and appraisal. Managers are striving to respond to national expectations and meet the routine demands of their roles. They have a good understanding of the environment within which the work takes place and know well the issues that the service is facing. However, there are too few managers to implement the range of important policy initiatives effectively.
16. There is a range of tools in place relating to the monitoring the quality of youth work, and a performance management model has been developed. Management information is collected routinely by the service and is used to inform senior managers of service performance against national targets. A small number of observations of practice have taken place; some aspects of quality assurance rely too much on 'soft information' held by managers and they lack rigour. The service has a good understanding of its costs and how its resources are deployed. It is well supported by the corporate finance team in monitoring budgets. Overall quality assurance arrangements are underdeveloped.
17. The service has a balance of strengths and weaknesses in each of the three key aspects of the report. The performance of the service is adequate overall. In the light of the resources provided by the local authority and the outcomes achieved by young people, the
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service provides satisfactory value for money.

Youth Service Indicators

Table 1: Youth population 13-19 (in 1000s)

	2003	2002
LEA	19.2	18.8

Source: Office of National Statistics (ONS) - Mid Year population Estimate (MYE)

1. The ONS's Mid Year population Estimate takes the most recent Census figure and estimates the births, deaths and migrations (etc.) that have taken place since that time. The above data estimates the population in this Local Authority in June 2003 and June 2002. The original 2002 estimate was revised and re-published in September 2004, and it is the revised figure that is shown here.

Table 2: Youth population 13-19 by ethnicity (in 1000s and %s)

	LEA 2001	LEA 2001 %	England 2001 %
White - British, Irish & Other White Background	17.2	89.8%	86.7%
Asian or Asian British	0.5	2.7%	6.8%
Black or Black British	0.3	1.5%	2.8%
Mixed	0.7	3.5%	2.4%
Other ¹	0.5	2.6%	1.2%
All	19.2	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Office of National Statistics. 2001 Census Commissioned Table. Crown copyright 2004. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

1. In order to protect against the inadvertent disclosure of information relating specifically to an identified person, some ethnic categories cannot be presented separately within Census material. These categories are therefore included in the Other category in this table. This category includes Chinese persons.

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Table 3: Net expenditure on youth service

	2003-04	2002-03	Change £	Change %
Net Expenditure on Youth Service	783,514	748,455	35,059	4.7%
Other Funding Expenditure	1,398,861	988,050	410,811	41.6%
Gross Expenditure	2,182,375	1,736,505	445,870	25.7%
Other Funding as % of gross	35.9%	56.9%	n/a	n/a

Source: NYA audit

Table 4: Youth service finance

	2004-05	2003-04	Change £	Change %
Total Education Budget	113,246,958	106,061,059	7,185,899	6.8%
Youth & Community Sub block Budget	1,585,063	1,626,097	670,903	-2.5%
Youth Service Net Budget	900,890	881,950	18,940	2.1%

Source: DfES – Section 52

Table 5: Youth service budget as % of the total education budget

	2004-05	2003-04
LEA	0.8%	0.8%
England - median value ¹	n/a	1.3%
England - range of values ²	n/a	0.6% to 5.4%

Source: DfES – Section 52

1. The median value is the middle value of the %s of all 150 Local Authorities in England.
2. The range of values shows the highest and lowest %s for individual Local Authorities in England.

Table 6: Youth service budget as % of the youth & community sub block budget

	2004-05	2003-04
LEA	56.8%	54.2%
England - median value ¹	n/a	71.6%
England - range of values ²	n/a	18.2% to 107.9%

Source: DfES – Section 52

1. The median value is the middle value of the %s of all 150 Local Authorities in England.
2. The range of values shows the highest and lowest %s for individual Local Authorities in England.

Table 7: % of young people aged 13-19 reached by youth service

	2003-04	2002-03	DfES Benchmark %
LEA ¹	24.5%	14.9%	25.0%

Source: Brighton & Hove Local Authority

1. % reached = no. of 13-19 year olds reached by Youth Services/total youth population 13-19 year olds.

Table 8: % of young people aged 13-19 participating in youth work

	2003-04	2002-03	DfES Benchmark %
LEA ¹	18.7%	14.9%	15.0%

Source: *brighton & Hove Local Authority*

1. % participating = no. of 13 -19 year olds participating in youth work/total youth population 13-19 year olds.

Table 9: Net budget per young person aged 13-19

	2004-05	2003-04	Change £	Change %
LEA	46.81	45.82	0.99	2.2%

Source: *DfES-S52/ONS*

1. Population data are taken from the ONS's Mid Year population Estimate of June 2003.

Table 10: Net Cost of each young person reached in 13-19 group

	2003-04	2002-03	Change £	Change %
LEA	166.03	266.16	-100.13	-37.6%

Source: *NYA audit*

1. Net cost per young person reached = net expenditure on Youth Service (excluding Other Funding) / number of 13-19 year olds reached.

2. The number of young people reached only includes the key age group of 13-19 year olds, although it is acknowledged that other young people in the 11 – 25 year old age group may have used the service during the year. The net spend is the total figure, and no attempt has been made to isolate the amount spent on 13-19 year olds within it.

Table 11: Number of full-time equivalent youth workers

	2003-04	2002-03	Change	Change %
Youth Workers (FTE)	19.0	28.5	-9.5	-33.3%

Source: *NYA audit*

Notes