

NORTH DORSET YOUNG PEOPLE STRATEGY

2006-2009

Draft for Consultation - March 2006

CONTENTS

Foreword	Page 3
Executive Summary	Page 4
Introduction	Page 5
Profile of Young People in North Dorset	Page 7
What the Council Wants to Achieve	Page 8
The North Dorset Strategy	Page 11
Preventing and Resolving Youth Homelessness	Page 12
Improving Access to Sports and Leisure Activities	Page 14
Preventing Young People from Becoming Victims of Crime and Supporting those at Risk of Offending	Page 17
Supporting Access to Youth Advice and Information Services	Page 20
Action Plan	Page 21

Foreword

I am pleased to present the North Dorset Young People Strategy. The District Council has an excellent record in supporting initiatives and projects for young people. We are proud of the range of constructive partnership working within North Dorset and I am grateful for the continued involvement and close co-operation of colleagues in many agencies and in particular to all those who have contributed to this Strategy.

The Strategy provides a strong foundation for developing services with partners in the light of the Government's Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' and the Children Act 2004 . There are key areas where the Council has duties and powers to improve the well-being of young people and we are determined to ensure maximum input into those areas. The District Council looks forward to continuing to work in partnership to deliver improved ways of working for the benefit of the children and young people of North Dorset, and their families

Cllr Graham Carr-Jones, Portfolio Holder for Young People's services

Executive Summary

The North Dorset Young People Strategy sets out the Council's contribution to the county-wide Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, the Local Area Agreement and the requirements of the Children Act 2004.

The strategy seeks to deliver two clear outcomes:

- ***Coordination and direction for the council's activities through an agreed strategy that is aligned with the Dorset Strategy for Children and Young People 2005-2006;***
- ***Increased social inclusion for young people including those from black and minority ethnic communities including gypsies and travellers.***

The Strategy seeks to deliver those outcomes through focussing on the following key areas:

- preventing and resolving youth homelessness;
- improving access to sports and leisure activities;
- preventing young people from becoming victims of crime and supporting those at risk of offending;
- supporting access to youth advice and information services.

In addition the strategy identifies areas where the Council will support other agencies in ensuring high quality health services, particularly sexual health and tackling alcohol misuse.

The Council will continue to work in partnership to deliver services which improve the well-being of young people in North Dorset.

The Strategy will be regularly monitored by the North Dorset Young People Strategy Group

1. INTRODUCTION

North Dorset District Council is committed to maintaining and improving the well-being of its young people. The council is working closely with Dorset County Council, other Dorset districts and boroughs and a range of statutory and voluntary partners to improve services for young people in the context of national guidance and the Dorset Local Area Agreement.

National guidance and legislation which influence this strategy include:

- [Children Act 2004](#);
- [Every Child Matters](#);
- [National Service Framework for children, young people and maternity services](#);
- [DfES Youth Green Paper](#);
- [Homelessness Act 2002](#);
- [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)

Local strategies and policies which influence this strategy include:

- **Dorset Local Area Agreement¹**
- **North Dorset Housing Strategy 2006-2009 (Draft)**
- **Dorset Crime and Drugs Deduction Strategy²**
- **Dorset Strategy for Children and Young People³**
- **Dorset Community Strategy⁴**

This strategy will focus on North Dorset District Council's contribution to the national, regional and county-wide agendas for young people aged from 15 to 24.

The strategy seeks to deliver two clear outcomes:

- ***Coordination and direction for the council's activities through an agreed strategy that is aligned with the Dorset Strategy for Children and Young People 2005-2006;***
- ***Increased social inclusion for young people including those from black and minority ethnic communities including gypsies and travellers.***

In order to deliver these outcomes the Council will focus its efforts on the following key areas:

¹ <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/0/c/DorsetLAAApproved18.03.pdf>

² <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/9/e/DorsetCrimeDrugsReductionStrategy200508.pdf>

³ <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/7/s/Dorset2006.pdf>

⁴ http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/m/d/Dorset_Community_Strategy.pdf

- Preventing and resolving youth homelessness;
- Providing young people with access to sports and leisure activities;
- Preventing young people from becoming victims of crime and supporting those at risk of offending;
- Supporting access to youth advice and information services.

During the development of this strategy the Council's Policy Review (Overview and Scrutiny) Sub-Committee undertook a review of health services for young people in the district. Specifically, members stated that they wished to set out recommendations on how NDDC support others in their work re

- Sexual health/teenage pregnancy
- Community Safety
- Alcohol Misuse

Members indicated that they would strongly support the principle of a capital bid by a supported housing provider, to give more supported units at Gillingham. The scheme envisaged would comprise five high support places plus four new one- bedroom flats.

Members summarised the practical actions it could recommend that the District Council could take to assist in the improvement of sexual health and the reduction of teenage pregnancies in Dorset as follows:

- Put pressure through the restructured Children's Services to tackle issues such as access to emergency contraceptive services particularly in rural areas, Youth Advisory Clinics in Youth Clubs, rural deprivation, cycles of dependency and risk taking.
- Develop a mechanism to inform the appropriate services of pregnant and needy young people.
- Promote effective working with voluntary agencies.

On community safety and alcohol misuse the Committee supported the work of the Dorset Strategic partnership's Health Gain Partnership in producing a Dorset Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

2. **PROFILE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN NORTH DORSET**

Population

The 2002 Office of National Statistics Registrar General mid-year population estimates for North Dorset are as follows:

15-19 Male	2,456
15-19 Female	<u>1,701</u>
Sub-Total	4,157

20-24 Male	1,785
20-24 Female	<u>1,091</u>
Sub-Total	2,876

Total young people aged 15-24 is 7,033. This represents 11% of the total population of the district. The proportion across Dorset County is 9.6%.

The proportion of the population aged 15-24 in Dorset is well below the national average and has fallen 20% since 1991.

A significant imbalance in North Dorset's population is due to a large armed forces base just outside Blandford. Among those aged 16-24 years in the District, there are 50% more males than females.

The number of young people in the district is also significantly affected by the the number of boarding schools such as Bryanston, Clayesmore and Milton Abbey.

Diversity

4.21% of the District's 0 -19 population were part of black or minority ethnic communities

Employment

With below 1% of the working age population, North Dorset is practically in a state of full employment. Only 58 persons between the age of 16 and 24 were unemployed in the district at December 2003. This represented 23% of all unemployment in the district.

Teenage Pregnancy

In 2002 the rate of teenage pregnancy in North Dorset was 19.35 per thousand young women aged 15 – 17. This compares with a Dorset-wide rate of 27.91.

Homelessness

There is a continuing rise in the numbers of families with children or pregnant mothers accepted as homeless in the district, rising from 102 in 2001/2002 to 120 in 2003/2004 to 149 in 2004/2005.

3. WHAT THE COUNCIL WANTS TO ACHIEVE

“The council is having some success in working with a wider network of partners to support young people. These partners include the CDRP, arts groups, Sport England and the county council. Positive aspects of the council’s work includes managing joint budgets of £50,000 in total and this is being effectively spent on various initiatives such as Dorset Action on Rural Transport (DART), and the Blackmore Vale Scooter Scheme. This targets improving access for young people in rural areas. Over 20 young people have benefited from the scheme; fourteen use scooters for access to work and ten have used the scheme to help them access training. The Blandford skate park was developed through effective partnership working with the town council, TREADS and local young people. The council also works effectively in partnership with the Dorset Race Equality Council and organised arts events last year for the Dream On project. This project effectively targeted young people from black and minority ethnic communities.”
(Audit Commission CPA Report 2003)

3.1 Children Act 2004

The Children Act 2004 requires “Children’s Services Authorities”, in this case Dorset County Council, to make arrangements to promote co-operation between all partners listed in the Act including district councils. The arrangements are made with a view to improving the well-being of children in the authority’s area so far as relating to:

- physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
- protection from harm and neglect;
- education, training and recreation;
- the contribution made by them to society;
- social and economic well-being.

The Council will be a member of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in accordance with section 13 of the Children Act 2004.

3.2 The Council has been working closely with the Dorset Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP). The Council’s Policy manager (Housing & Community Safety) is an active member of the CYPSP. There is a 13-19 Years Strategy Group as a sub-group of the CYPSP. This group has been responsible for taking the lead on the Blandford Pathfinder (see below). The Council is also involved with another key CYPSP sub-group, the Young People’s Housing Group.

The **priority outcomes** of the Dorset CYPSP are to ensure that young people:

- **are healthy** – through experiencing healthy lifestyles, being physically and sexually healthy, by a reduction in the number of young people who are obese, teenage pregnancies and use of illegal drugs;
- **stay safe** – by experiencing improved care, security and stability, a reduction in incidents of bullying, violence, and offending and in the number of accidents;

- **can take part in activities they enjoy** – young people will be more successful at KeyStage 3 and 4 attainment and able at 16+ to progress and succeed in education, employment and training opportunities;
- **have opportunities to make a positive contribution to their communities** – parents and young people will be more actively engaged and consulted, young people will undertake a wider range of volunteering opportunities;
- **are well-provided for, enjoying social and economic well-being** – young people will be suitably equipped for decisions about, and success within, appropriate progression routes

3.3 The Dorset Local Area Agreement – Children and Young People Block

The following priorities have been identified in the Local Area Agreement:

- To improve outcomes for young people through the creation of a youth support service (13-19).
- To produce improved outcomes for 0-12 year olds through creating more extended schools and children’s centres
- To provide improved services for children, young people and families through a joint commissioning model;
 - a.) making services more responsive to local communities
 - b.) integrated planning and delivery
 - c.) greater involvement of local VCS

There are increasing numbers of young people aged 16+ who are moving away from Dorset to access education, training, employment, housing and new lifestyles in general. Because of the rural nature of Dorset, the delivery of accessible and high quality services is made more difficult. The newly emerging extended schools and children centres initiative was seen as an opportunity to develop locally based services in all communities. There are excellent examples of integrated service delivery across Dorset involving a range of providers (education, social care & health, health, voluntary sector, schools etc). This integrated approach was not however widespread. Partner organisations agreed that multi-agency integrated delivery of services to children and young people should be seen as the norm in all areas of Dorset.

North Dorset is one of two local authorities (the other being Christchurch) identified in the Local Area Agreement to act as pilots for integrated commissioning of children and young people’s services at a district/borough level. This approach is being developed in North Dorset through the Blandford Pathfinder.

3.4 **The Blandford Pathfinder**

The Blandford Pathfinder forms part of the Local Area Agreement block on young people's services. The role of the Blandford Pathfinder is to develop youth support services accessible to all 13-19 young people in the catchment area of the Blandford School. These services will have a sharp focus on those most in need of support, but will operate within a universal context. This is to avoid stigma to either the team or young people, and to enhance the quality of information advice guidance and support for all young people. It is intended that the pathfinder will eventually be rolled out to the rest of North Dorset and across the county. The Council is an active participant in the pathfinder.

As part of the Blandford Pathfinder a consultation exercise with young people was carried out during October half-term week. Dorset Children's Fund and Link (the young people's advice and information network) undertook the consultation with young people and their families in Blandford and its surrounding villages. In August 2005 the Council together with the County Council and other Dorset local authorities jointly commissioned a survey into the needs of gypsy and traveller communities. All of the activities set out below will contribute to increasing social inclusion.

3.5 **The Council's Aims**

The first key outcome the Council is seeking to achieve is:

Coordination and direction for the Council's activities through an agreed strategy that is aligned with the objectives of the Dorset Strategy for Children and Young People

The second key outcome the Council aims to achieve is:

Increased social inclusion for all young people including those from black and minority ethnic communities including gypsies and travellers

4. **THE NORTH DORSET STRATEGY**

4.1 The Children Act 2004 gave local authorities a new duty to co-operate with other agencies to improve the well-being of children and young people and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Council is working in partnership with the Children's Services Authority (Dorset County Council) and a range of other agencies to meet the requirements of the Act. Through this strategy it is also focussing on those activities where it can make particular significant contributions.

4.2 North Dorset District Council's strategic contribution is focussed on the following key areas

- Preventing and resolving youth homelessness;
- Providing young people with access to sports and leisure activities;
- Preventing young people from being victims of crime and supporting those at risk of offending;
- Supporting access to youth advice and information services.

4.2 The Council's Policy Review (Overview and Scrutiny) Sub-Committee is currently undertaking a review of health services to young people in North Dorset. The review is focusing on the following key areas:

- Sexual health
- Teenage pregnancy
- Alcohol misuse

The sub-committee's findings have been incorporated into the local Young People's Strategy.

4.3 Three years ago the Council set up a multi-agency Young People's Housing Strategy Group. In November 2005 it was agreed to turn that group into a wider Young Person's Strategy Group looking at all of the requirements and services for young people across the District. The Group will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Young People Strategy.

5. **PREVENTING AND RESOLVING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS**

5.1 Young People can become homeless for a variety of reasons. Their homelessness will almost always be linked to family and social issues above and beyond the lack of appropriate housing. The Homelessness Act 2002 gave all 16 and 17 year olds and care leavers aged between 18 and 20 a priority requirement for accommodation if they became homeless through no fault of their own. *Every Child Matters* acknowledged that preventing and resolving youth homelessness is critical to ensuring that young people achieve their potential. The Young Persons Housing sub-group of the CYPSP and the North Dorset Young Persons Strategy Group will bring together the relevant agencies to ensure:

- effective housing responses for those leaving care;
- tracking mechanisms and protocols to support young people at risk of parental exclusion and homelessness;
- an effective pattern of housing and support across the district to tackle youth homelessness

5.2 In 2004 the council together with the Supporting People Team, West Dorset DC and Weymouth and Portland BC was involved in a study of housing and support services for young people in the western part of Dorset. Consultants (Nick Day Associates) were commissioned to:

- assess whether the current pattern of services is what is needed;
- specifically assess the inter-relationship and effectiveness of Magna services, including the ways foyers are used;
- evaluate the need for extra capacity (in a particular provider) in Weymouth;
- to investigate the particular pattern of services and inter-related problems in North Dorset and offer ways forward.

The report recommended that North Dorset seek to build a pattern of housing and support services that included:

- advice and information services and housing needs assessment;
- tenancy sustainment/floating support service;
- emergency/crisis housing with 24-hour support;

- long-term housing and support for people with a high level of support needs;
- housing with low-level support for people with a lower level of support requirements;
- resettlement services for people moving on to independent accommodation.

Since the time of the consultants' report, North Dorset has seen the closure of two schemes for vulnerable young people – Magnolia Court in Blandford and the Old School House in Gillingham. Both schemes had significant problems of management and were failing to provide the necessary standards of housing and support that this council would expect to see in provision to which it was referring vulnerable young people. The Council has, however, managed to retain the Supporting People revenue funding that was attached to the schemes. This funding will be used to support new self-contained provision in Gillingham and floating support services in and around Blandford.

5.3 **What the Council is doing**

The Council is committed to taking a preventative approach and working with young people and other agencies to deliver effective interventions to prevent homelessness. It is an active member of the Dorset Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership's sub-group tasked with developing a county-wide strategy for young people's housing. In addition the Council is:

- directly funding youth advice and information services at Toby's in Shaftesbury and Treads in Blandford. Also funding CAB and Shaftesbury Advice Centre;
- carrying out an independent review of its homelessness and housing advice services
- working with Supporting People team to provide housing-related support services for young homeless people across the District – funding for a floating support service has been earmarked using funding that used to go in to Magnolia Court and the Old School House in Gillingham;
- enabling the provision of new housing in Gillingham and Shaftesbury for young people in housing need;
- using ODPM Homelessness money to fund Dorset RELATE to provide a family mediation service for young people who are homeless or potentially homeless;
- developing a multi agency assessment panel for vulnerable people.

6. **IMPROVING ACCESS TO SPORTS AND LEISURE**

“...the council’s leisure facilities offer a good range of programmes and activities aimed at young people. These include sports, play groups and activities during school holidays. Entrance fees to leisure facilities are reduced for young people. The 2003 Dorset Youth Games were a multi-agency sports event. Over 1,000 young people aged eight to fourteen years taking part, many not participating in an organised sports event before and young people with disabilities also participated. The council plans to expand the games in 2004.”
(Audit Commission CPA Report 2003)

6.1 For a number of years the Council has played an active role in developing and supporting sports and leisure activities for young people. Such activities contribute towards local area agreement targets for reducing obesity and can often divert young people from anti-social behaviour. The Council’s Outreach and Sports Development Officer plays a key role in developing local youth sport and leisure activities including Dorset Youth Games and the Blandford Skatefest. The Council also provides financial support to a wide range of other leisure and sporting activities.

6.2 **What the Council is doing**

Dorset Youth Games

North Dorset District Council has been involved in and supported the Dorset Youth Games (DYG) for the past 7 years, with the event being hosted by Bryanston School in North Dorset for the past four years. The Games will now be organised by the new Active Dorset County Sports Partnership. The Council’s Sports Development Officer is an active member of the organising committee that shapes all aspects of the event. The DYG is held over a weekend in July at the end of the school summer term. It provides a range of sporting opportunities for young people aged between 9 and 15 years of age. Day one focuses on providing a large range of sport opportunities for young people with a disability. Over the two days the event caters for over 1,000 participants plus many other spectators, all young people attending receive a free t-shirt, programme and lunch. The DYG is a huge success and provides an excellent showcase for young peoples sport in the County of Dorset.

North Dorset Skate Festivals

The Council co-ordinates two annual youth culture events based around the skate park facilities at Blandford and Gillingham. The Gillingham event forms part of the opening of the Gillingham Festival. Both events are for young people aged between 11 and 19 years, with an entry fee of £1 per day. The events aim to provide workshops in skating, skateboarding, BMX, breakdance, graffiti art and music. As well as the workshops there is a showcase event with live music and a competition day. The two events combined run for seven days and attract hundreds of young people who have a great time expressing themselves positively. The event is organised by a steering group which is co-ordinated by the Council with many community groups/organisations involved including youth

centres, young people's information centres, police, Primary Care Trusts, businesses, Young Peoples Skating Group and other clubs.

Big Lottery Funding

North Dorset District Council has the opportunity to gain access to £200,000 from the Big Lottery in 2006 to develop and enhance play opportunities across the district over the next three years. This work will cover young people of all ages in enabling them to access good play opportunities.

Dorset Play Forum

The Council's Sports Development Officer represents the Council at the Dorset Play Forum which provides advice and co-ordination of play across Dorset. This includes championing the Dorset Play Strategy and the Our Space 2 project which helps settlements with under 3,000 people with play area projects. The work of the Forum provides a much needed voice for play developments in the County.

Supporting Youth Centres

As part of the sports development work the Council supports the running of the summer Focus on Youth activity programmes at Sturminster Newton, Gillingham and Blandford Youth Centres. It also contributes to the cost of running a Community Sports Leaders Award for young people of Gillingham and Sturminster Newton. Young people taking part in this award are then given the opportunity to volunteer using their new skills at other events in the district.

Holiday Activity Programme

North Dorset District Council leisure centres run an action packed programme of activities for young people of all ages over the school holidays. The programme covers sport, leisure, arts and craft activities at all four leisure centres, Gillingham, Sturminster Newton, Shaftesbury and Blandford.

Community Coaches

The Community Coaches scheme is being rolled out by the Active Dorset County Sports Partnership, the coaches will provide increased access to quality on- the-ground coaching opportunities for young people across the county. The focus of the scheme is to provide the coaching sessions in community settings with a maximum of 30% in school curriculum time. As part of the Council's sports development programme we are supporting the scheme to ensure young people in North Dorset have access to more quality coaching sessions across a range of sports.

Young Persons GP Referral Sessions

We have been running two schemes in partnership with Shaftesbury Sports College for young people that are in need of more physical activity and lifestyle advice. The scheme has been working with students aged 12/13 years and members of the sixth form. The students are given a supervised session in the

Council's gym facilities and are helped to set their own targets and goals which are specific to them in each case. The Council's Physical Activity and Lifestyle Co-ordinator has been running the sessions and provides additional information to the exercise about what makes a good lifestyle and things to avoid or cut down on.

7. PREVENTING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM BEING VICTIMS OF CRIME AND SUPPORTING THOSE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

“The 2003 Blandford Skate Fest involved a number of partners and agencies who used this opportunity to promote education, and anti-drugs initiatives. There have been fewer instances of petty crime and harassment by young people since the development of the Blandford skate park” (Audit Commission CPA report 2003).

- 7.1 The community safety strand of NDDC Young People Strategy is based upon the relevant parts of the 5 elements of the ‘stay safe’ outcome of Every Child Matters (ECM) and the relevant parts of the 6 elements of the ‘make a positive contribution’ outcome of ECM:

Stay safe

Children and young people should be:

- Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation;
- Safe from accidental injury and death;
- Safe from bullying and discrimination;
- Safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school;
- Have security, stability and are cared for.

Make a positive contribution

Children and young people should be able to:

- Engage in decision-making and support the community and environment;
- Engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school;
- Develop positive relationships and choose not to bully and discriminate;
- Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges;
- Develop enterprising behaviour.

7.2 Young People and Crime

Less than 12% of recorded crime is committed by young people. Most of this involves property rather than violence and overall youth crime is falling. A recent study showed that around half of all young people say that they have been a victim of crime in the last year and a third feel unsafe in their local area. The Youth Justice Board reports that over 60% of school children in England and

Wales fear being physically assaulted and 40% fear being bullied. As well as being victims in their own right young people are often seriously affected by witnessing distressing crimes such as domestic violence. There is evidence that young people are often fearful of using some public spaces although they are sometimes seen to be monopolising others. North Dorset is a low crime area but has a disproportionately high fear of crime and low levels of tolerance of anti-social behaviour. Partnership working will be the main route to achieving the NDDC Young People Strategy outcomes. One of our main partners is Dorset Police and we will link NDDC Young People Strategy with the “young people as victims and witnesses” and “pre-crime prevention” parts of the ACPO Strategy For Children and Young People. This will also tie up with NDDC Young People Strategy focus on advice and information.

7.3 What the Council is doing

The council supports and funds diversionary activities which offer young people opportunities for sport and leisure activity. In consultation with the Eastern Dorset Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) North Dorset DC has directed Home Office funding contributions to local schemes such as :

- Blandford Youth Trust - £4,000;
- Blandford Youth Centre - £4,000;
- Re-run (scheme for young runaways) - £4,000
- “Last Orders” a theatre production tackling binge-drinking - £2,400

Other funds will be targeted on other areas in the district such as Gillingham, Shaftesbury and in the rural areas of the district.

To deliver in this key area NDDC will

- work with youth organizations and young people to encourage young people to report crime;
- include young people’s views in the development of policies to tackle crime, fear of crime and increase communication of realistic news about crime and disorder;
- include young people in the problem solving activities of Local Community Safety Action Groups;
- support the work of local agencies working with young victims and providing social education and diversionary activities;
- ensure that the needs of young people are taken into account when reviewing council services’ compliance with s17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998;

- support the development of restorative justice techniques, already used by some police officers, particularly in cases of anti-social behaviour involving young people;

7.4 Tackling Youth Crime and Disorder

The work of the Community Safety Officer, the Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer and the North Dorset Community Safety Action Group will also tackle illegal drug use, anti-social behaviour and under-age drinking by young people

In the event of anti-social behaviour by a young person the Council follows the county-wide multi-agency protocol on Anti Social Behaviour. All relevant agencies are contacted and a case conference held. A decision is then made on the most appropriate course of action. The Council has achieved success with a number of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) with young people whose behaviour was socially unacceptable.

The Council works closely with the DCC department of trading standards in tackling the under-age purchase of alcohol. A number of successful prosecutions have been made of traders selling alcohol to under age young people. The Council has also worked successfully with the police on campaigns such as the “Last Orders” campaign to tackle binge-drinking.

8. SUPPORTING ACCESS TO YOUTH ADVICE AND INFORMATION SERVICES

“The council contributes to an effective outreach and development programme, offering young people advice and support. For example, TREADS, a young people’s advice centre in Blandford Forum, provides confidential health advice and is part funded by the council.”

(Audit Commission CPA Report 2003)

North Dorset benefits from a number of voluntary and community sector advice and information services, two of which are specifically for young people – Treads in Blandford and Tobys in Shaftesbury.

The advice and information agencies provide a front line service which is able to resolve many problems before they reach a critical point and require the Council’s statutory involvement, for example with regard to homelessness or anti-social behaviour.

What the Council is doing

The Council recognises and values the important contribution of independent advice and information services to supporting young people. Such services often prevent young people becoming homeless and becoming victims or perpetrators of crime. In acknowledgement of this work the Council has entered service level agreements with four advice and information agencies and provides grant funding to Toby’s in Shaftesbury and Treads in Blandford. It also grant funds the CAB and Shaftesbury Advice Centre. In addition to this core grant funding the Council has also channelled Home Office funding or provided additional funding for specific work.

The Council has set up an Advice Agencies forum which meets occasionally to share issues and good practice and to ensure high quality services. In order to receive grant from the Council the advice and information services must have reached a level of accreditation with the Community Legal Services Association.

Action Plan

PREVENTING AND RESOLVING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

- continue support for youth advice and information services at Toby's in Shaftesbury and Treads in Blandford. Also funding CAB and Shaftesbury Advice Centre;
2006-07
- implement the findings of the Shelter independent review of the Council's homelessness and housing advice services;
from June 2006
- continue working with Supporting People team to provide housing-related support services for young homeless people across the District;
2006 ongoing
- enable the provision of new housing in Gillingham, Blandford and Shaftesbury for young people in housing need;
2006-08
- using ODPM Homelessness money to fund Dorset RELATE to provide a family mediation service for young people who are homeless or potentially homeless;
2006-07
- developing a multi agency assessment panel for vulnerable people with housing problems;
by October 2006
- work with the CYPSP Young People's Housing Strategy Group on county-wide initiatives.
2006 ongoing

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SPORTS AND LEISURE

- Support community coach scheme;
2006-07
- The Council has the opportunity to access £200,000 from the Big Lottery in 2006 to develop and enhance play opportunities across the district over the next three years. This work will cover young people of all ages in enabling them to access good play opportunities;
2006-08
- co-ordinate two annual youth culture events based around the skate park facilities at Blandford and Gillingham – **summer 2006**

PREVENTING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM BEING VICTIMS OF CRIME AND SUPPORTING THOSE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

- work with youth organizations and young people to encourage young people to report crime;
2006- ongoing
- include young people's views in the development of policies to tackle crime, fear of crime and increase communication of realistic news about crime and disorder;
2006- ongoing
- include young people in the problem solving activities of Local Community Safety Action Groups;
2006- ongoing
- support the work of local agencies working with young victims and providing social education and diversionary activities;
2006- ongoing
- ensure that the needs of young people are taken into account when reviewing council services' compliance with s17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
2006- ongoing
- support the development of restorative justice techniques, already used by some police officers, particularly in cases of anti-social behaviour involving young people;
2006-07

SUPPORTING ACCESS TO YOUTH ADVICE AND INFORMATION SERVICES

- further develop in-house specialist housing advice for young people;
from September 2006
- subject to available resources, continue to provide financial support to advice and information services for young people;
- work with advice and information services to seek additional forms of funding support;
2006 ongoing
- ensure all advice and information services supported by the Council are accredited by the CLSP **2006**

