

YOUTH WORK IN ENGLAND-AN OVERVIEW

2009

History of youth work

- Origins in the Victorian era, starting with church movements such as the Methodists
- Youth clubs established in poor areas, uniformed groups start including scouts, etc
- Major change at the end of the second world war. Education Act of 1944 establishes requirement for local governments to provide youth provision

History of youth work (cont.)

- 1960s, greater provision of youth projects and youth clubs
- 1980s, youth work moves into new areas of work, including detached youth work, youth information, etc
- 1990s, youth work becomes more involved with youth crime initiatives, drugs work and working more closely with social services, youth justice and the health

Youth Work Today

- Youth work is located in:
 - General youth clubs
 - Local youth projects
 - specialist projects delivering:
 - detached youth work, drugs education, citizenship in schools, alternative educational provision, sexual health, crime diversion, teenage pregnancy, participation and inclusion, health, etc.

Youth Work Today

- Estimated 6,000 full-time youth workers nationally. Many thousands of part-time youth workers.
- Youth work is delivered by both the statutory (Local Government) sector and the voluntary (independent) sector.
- Youth work intervention now seen as an effective means of developing work with the 'hard to reach'

What is youth work?

- Youth work is a process of informal personal, social and political education, founded on a voluntary relationship with young people, that strives to challenge discrimination, develop understanding and empower individuals and groups.

What does the government mean by youth work?

- Youth service activities (*by that they mean youth work*) are primarily for personal and social development. They can be formal or informal. They must be linked to raising achievement and standards in education, training and employment or initiatives aimed at promoting inclusion and participation
- All the types of youth service provision must be focussed on youth work that is supporting formal and informal education, training or employment.

Current changes in youth work – What are the contributing factors?

- Society - changing expectations and make-up
- Government - overarching priorities impacting upon youth provision
- Communities - safety and cohesion
- Young people - changing issues in the 21st Century
- A profession coming to terms with being professional

Society

- An aging population
- Greater ethnic diversity
- Expectation that the state will provide
- Good citizenship versus the cult of the individual
- An unsure future for us all

Government

- Restructuring the welfare state
- Enforcing social inclusion
- Immigration
- Europe
- Getting the unemployed back to work
- Redeveloping our inner cities
- Re-shaping education
- Dealing with crime

Communities

- Breaking up of traditional communities
- Safety in our neighbourhoods
- Getting rid of the neighbours from hell
- Regenerating disadvantaged areas
- Greater community participation in decision-making

Young People

- Education
- Health
 - Physical
 - Mental
 - Sexual
- Employment- What job for life?
- Internet generation
- Drugs
- Crime
- Political disaffection
- Expectations versus reality
- Sense of identity

The changing face of youth work - “The new architecture”

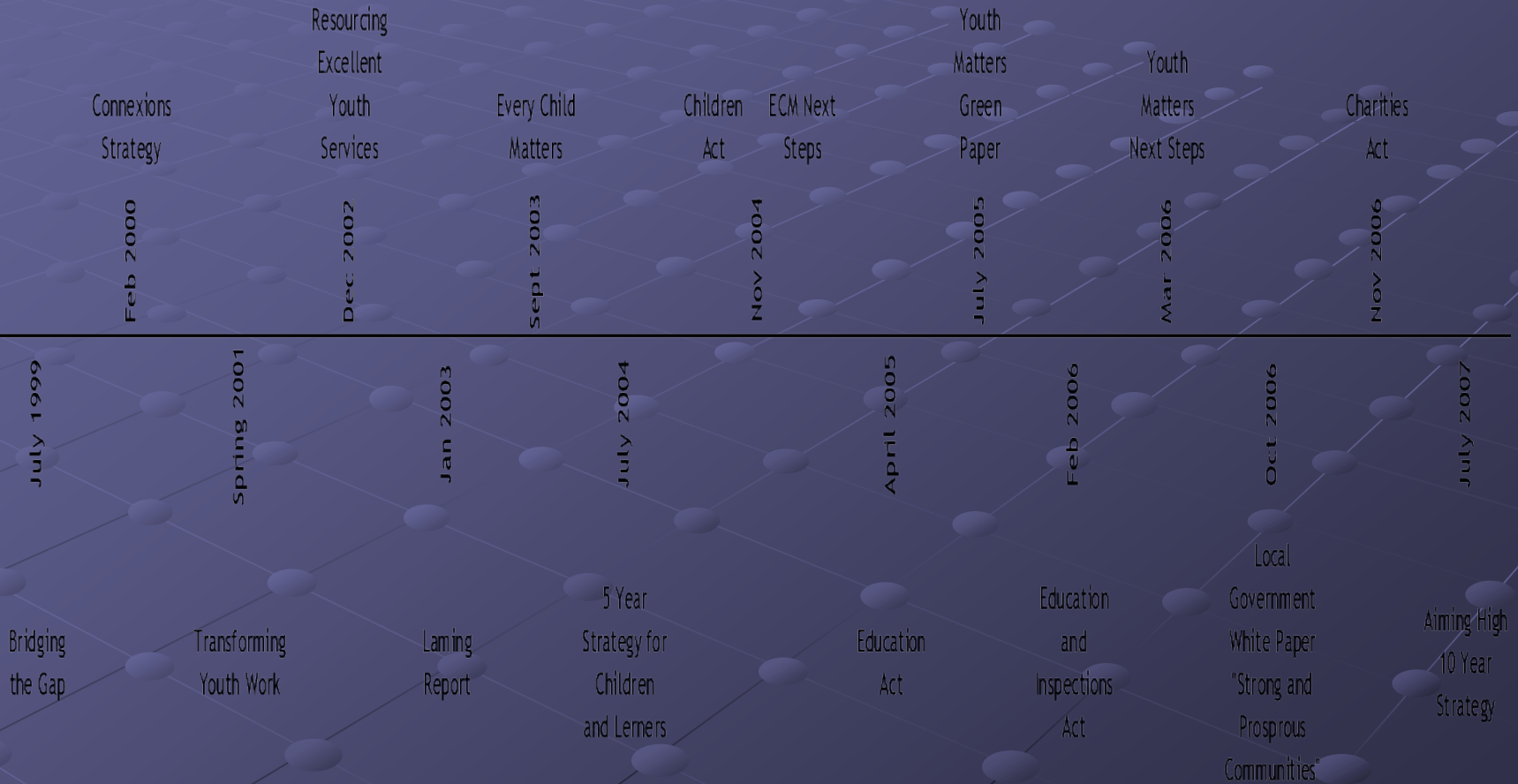
- Professionalising the service
- Accountability
- Target driven service delivery
- Young people’s participation in structural development
- Training of full- and part-time youth workers
- Restructuring of local authority youth services
- Shortfall of qualified youth workers
- The fall, rise and fall of the voluntary sector

What is bringing about these changes?

● Government Driven Agenda

- Every Child Matters
- Aiming high – 10 year youth strategy
- Integrated services
- Commissioning of public services
- Involvement of young people in policy development
- development of new partnerships
- greater role for the voluntary sector
- emphasis on training and qualifications for youth work staff to work in multi-agency environments

Government Policy on Youth 1999-Present



Where are we now?

- Every Child Matters and Youth Matters
- Integrated services/Children's Trusts
- Extended Schools
- Positive activities
- Wholesale restructuring of public services
- Significant changes in the way that youth work is delivered
- Time of great uncertainty, challenge and opportunity