


Local Government Association


The National Youth Agency
Getting it right for young people

Budget Devolution

Survey and Seminar Report

July 2008

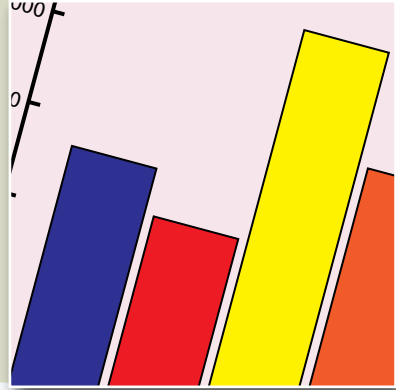
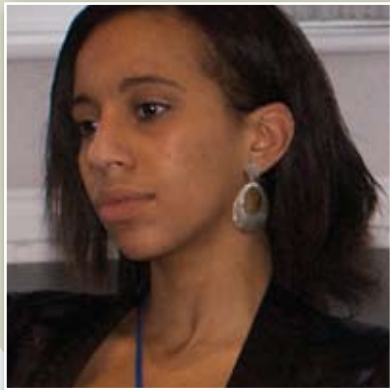
Supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

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Summary

July 2008

Supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

This paper gives the results of the survey of local authorities and the seminar organised by The National Youth Agency for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), supported by the Local Government Association (LGA). These results were not conclusive but are part of the overall exploration work with the DCSF to produce guidelines on the five per cent and 25 per cent targets in *Aiming High for Young People – a ten year strategy for positive activities (the Strategy)*.

Background to the survey run from January to March 2008

The aim of the survey was to gain baseline data on current spending levels on positive activities for young people and young people's involvement in decisions on this. This is in the context of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, which requires local authorities to secure positive activities for young people, and the targets set out in *Aiming High for Young People* for young people to control specified percentages of youth services or positive activities budgets.

The questionnaire was sent in early 2008 to a sample of one third of first-tier local authorities and, for two-tier authorities, district councils within the selected county councils. It asked for information on specific areas of positive activities spending, both in services for young people only and in universal services. It also sought information on action being taken to implement the *Aiming High* commitments, whether respondents thought they were achievable in their authorities, and what they perceived the barriers to be. It also asked for examples of good practice in involving young people in spending decisions.

Responses were received from 48

authorities, an overall response rate of 36 per cent. This can be broken down into a response rate of 66 per cent for the 50 first-tier authorities (33 councils) and a much lower response rate of 18 per cent (15 councils) for second-tier authorities.

Survey findings

It rapidly became clear from telephone and e-mail communications and analysis of the responses received that the survey would not provide robust baseline information on current spending on positive activities or young people's influence over this. However, it provides:

- Evidence about what data on positive activities is currently available, the difficulties in collecting data on positive activities – particularly on services not focusing on young people – and some information on how local authorities are developing integrated approaches to positive activities and data collection.
- Identification of some of the key issues and challenges including the need for clarity over definitions – particularly of positive activities, the budgets covered by the targets, and budget devolution.
- Some data on spending on

positive activities in particular areas and indications on whether young people influence this spending. However, this data needs to be treated with extreme caution, because of differences in interpretation and the age ranges covered.

- As anticipated, the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds offer young people the most comprehensive opportunities for controlling significant amounts of money. However, the survey has revealed some interesting examples of young people making decisions on funding within other services, including youth services, PAYP, play and parks, and libraries.
- Respondents provided examples of practice from their areas, which offered a range of approaches and covered different services. They include several examples of district councils offering a variety of youth provision and demonstrating commitment to involving young people in determining services. This information is particularly welcome, since district councils will have an important role in developing positive activities within two-tier authorities. Examples from services not focusing on young people also provided evidence of approaches which could

be replicated elsewhere.

The full report of the budget devolution survey can be found on the website at www.nya.org.uk/budgetdevolutionreport

Background to the seminar on budget devolution on 21 May 2008

Delegates included a sample from the local authority respondents to the survey, local authority finance officers, third sector organisation representatives including a young person as speaker, the DCSF and The NYA.

The intention of the day was to build on the findings of the budget devolution scoping survey and for the DCSF to clarify the intent behind the 25 per cent target for budget devolution set out in the Strategy. The seminar sought to complete the sentence:

'At least five per cent/ 25 per cent of local authority [budgets / spend / resources] for [youth services / positive activities / services for young people] should be [controlled / influenced / shaped] by young people by 2010-11 / 2018-19.'

Seminar findings

The lively debate and diverse views reflected the complexity of the issues involved in clarifying the focus of these

targets and working out methods of measurement. The findings below reflect majority views rather than a consensus. See the full report, on The NYA website, for the range of points made.

The DCSF confirmed that the decisions in the sentence above will apply to both the targets in the Strategy – five per cent by 2010-11 and 25 per cent by 2018-19.

The seminar concluded with this completed sentence: 'At least five per cent/ 25 per cent of local authority (unitary, first tier and second tier) budgets for services for young people should be actively shaped by young people with evidence of this.'

There was strong support amongst participants for the ambition of the government for young people to have greater control over services provided for them, hence the wording 'at least' in the sentence rather than the 'up to' in the Strategy.

With the ending of JARS, mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that young people's decision making is a focus of future inspection and assessment processes. Most of the small groups recommended a tailored

tool based on The NYA *Hear by Right standards framework for participation* to use in self assessment of budget devolution, which could be included as part of the self-assessment for the CAA.

Given the responsibility of elected members in law for control of the finances of the local authority, *actively shaping* was generally supported as an accurate term, which could meet the ambitions of the policy. In addition, delegates agreed that each authority should also have a pot of money which young people control, as is the case with YOF and YCF.

Actively shaping should occur and be evidenced at two levels:

- a strategic level at the point of setting priorities – allocation of available funding to which priorities and in which geographical areas;
- an operational level – on the implementation of decisions made at a strategic level. For example, staffing needs and locations are decided at the strategic level and recruitment decisions are operational; or type and location of facilities are strategic and design of the building,

furnishings, equipment, rules and activities are operational.

Collecting data on 'services for young people' was thought to be realistic for enabling the inclusion of data from any department within the local authority or any organisation funded by it that provides services for young people.

There was strong support for a monetary aspect to the target. The use of budgets rather than other options secures young people's involvement in the strategic level of decision making as well as allocation of resources for spend. It was agreed that the term 'budget' included expectations that young people would actively shape resources such as location and recruitment of staff or decisions about facilities.

The full report of the budget devolution seminar can be found on The NYA website at www.nya.org.uk/budgetdevolutionreport

Next steps

The Department for Children, Schools and Families will put a submission up to the Minister before the recess setting out progress to date and recommending a way forward. Further information on this will be available over the summer.


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Section 2: Positive activities and devolved budgets survey findings

1. Background

This survey was undertaken in response to two key policy developments. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on (first-tier) local authorities, working with partners, to promote the well-being of young people aged 13 to 19 through securing access to educational and recreational leisure-time activities. These activities are commonly referred to as 'positive activities'. The Act also requires local authorities to consult young people about youth provision in their area and to take their views into account. *Aiming High for Young People, a ten-year strategy for positive activities*, included a commitment to increase young people's direct influence on spending on youth activities and facilities, building on the experience of the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds. It set out two specific targets: that local authorities should devolve five per cent of their budget for youth services to young people by 2010-11, and a longer-term ambition that by 2018, 25 per cent of local authority budgets for youth services or positive activities should be devolved to young people.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has convened a Youth Empowerment Stakeholders Working Group to take these policies forward. At its meeting in December 2007, this group acknowledged the need to gain some 'baseline' information about local authorities' current spending on positive activities, and the extent to which young people influenced this spending. The National Youth Agency (NYA) offered to work with the DCSF and other partners, particularly the Local Government Association (LGA), to seek this information.

Staff from The NYA and the DCSF met in January 2008 to discuss how to proceed. It was acknowledged that there is a difficulty in defining what is included under the heading of 'positive activities'; while *Youth Matters* provided a broad definition, no more detailed guidance was currently available. It was therefore agreed that the questionnaire should identify specific areas of spending, indicating for each area what should be included. It was also agreed to categorise young people's involvement in decisions into three levels: control, choice (within limited options) and consultation. The questionnaire would also seek information on awareness and implementation of the *Aiming High* commitments in respondents' authorities, and perceived barriers to meeting these commitments. It would also invite respondents to indicate examples of practice in their authorities.

It was agreed to sample a total of 50 first-tier local authorities¹ – representing one third of these authorities – selected to ensure an equal spread across regions and type of authority. To take account of two-tier authorities where arrangements for the delivery of positive activities are shared between county and district councils, the questionnaire was also sent to all district or borough councils within the sampled county councils, a total of 82 second-tier councils. The sample was also chosen to ensure good representation of those authorities which are acknowledged as having some expertise in participation and citizen involvement, including youth engagement beacon councils, empowering areas, and participatory budgeting pilots.

It was also agreed that the questionnaire should be sent out by The NYA, signed by its chief executive and senior officers from the DCSF and LGA, to indicate the importance attached to this piece of work and maximise response rates.

¹ One further authority, Newcastle upon Tyne, was subsequently added to this sample as the only local authority in the Department for Communities and Local Government's Participatory Budgeting pilot to have a specific focus on young people.

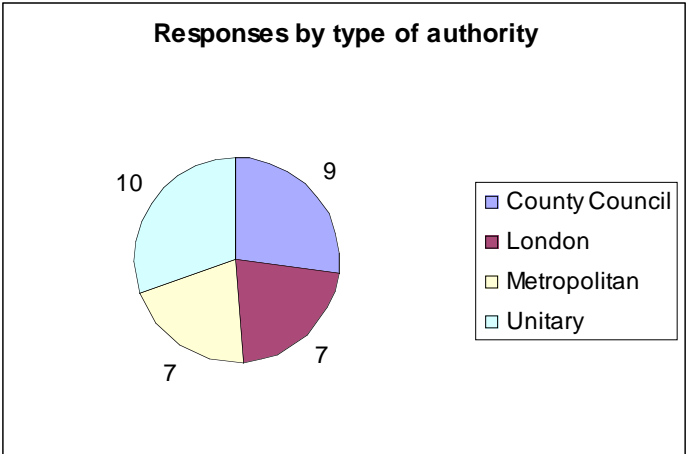
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2. Responses

The questionnaire was sent out in early February 2008,² with a deadline for responses by the end of the month (extended on request). Responses were received from 48 authorities – 36 per cent, which was lower than the 50 per cent response rate hoped for by the Agency. However, there was a good return from first-tier authorities, with nearly two-thirds responding (33 councils) but, not surprisingly, a much lower rate for second-tier authorities – 18 per cent (15 councils). A further two district councils stated that they could not complete the questionnaire, and one provided some information in a telephone conversation.

The questionnaire was sent to directors of children’s services in first-tier authorities (copied to the chief executive) and to the chief executive of district or borough councils. Within first-tier authorities, it appears that the questionnaire was mostly passed to a senior officer in the authority’s youth service or youth support service. District council responses came from a wide variety of officers, indicating the difficulty of locating positive activities within second-tier authorities. The job titles of those completing the questionnaire included chief executive; policy officer; community engagement officer; finance manager; community services officer; arts development officer; children, young people and play manager; partnerships manager; and head of corporate affairs. See Annex 1 for further details of respondents.

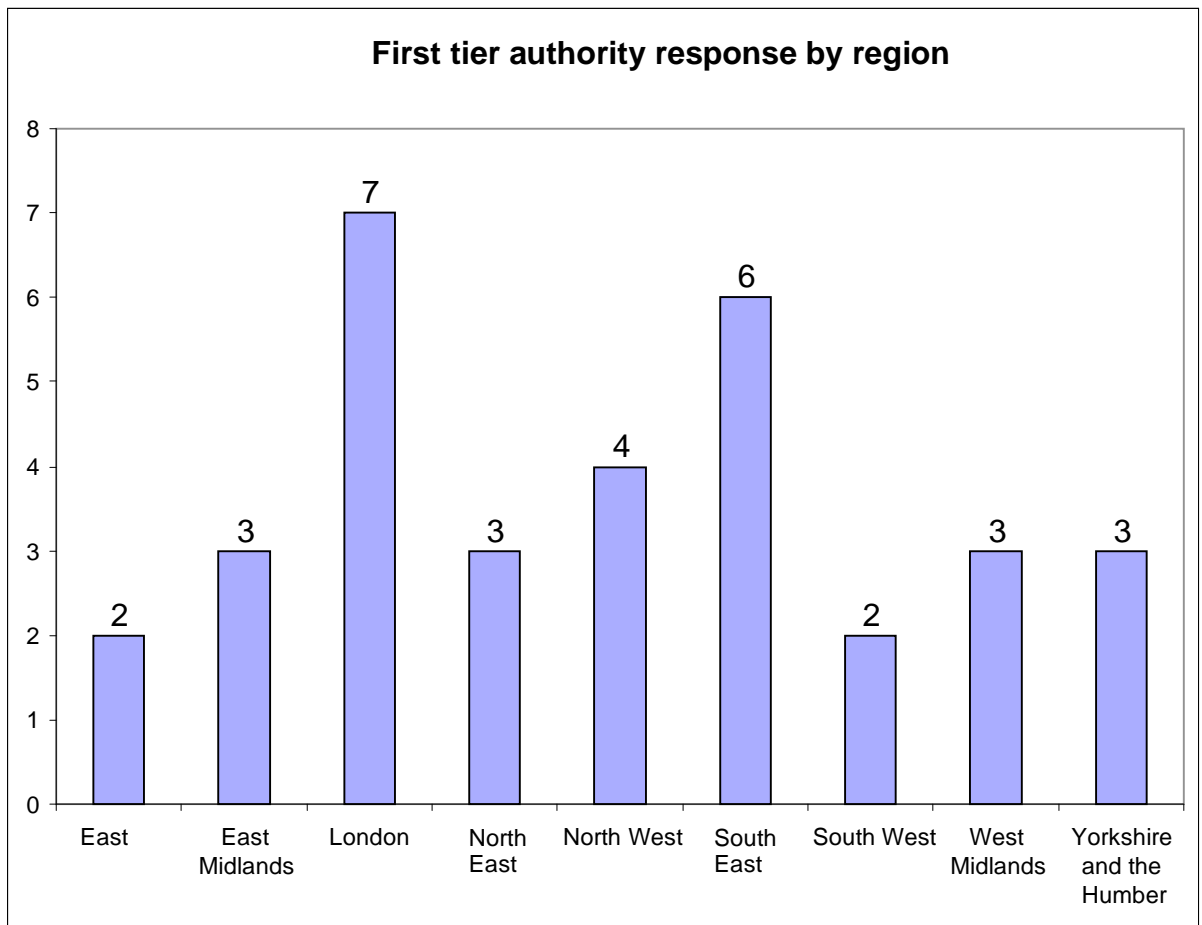
Responses were received from all types of local authority, with county councils most likely to respond (9 out of 11 distributed) and metropolitan authorities least likely (7 out of 13).



Base = 33 authorities.

Responses were received from first-tier authorities in all nine regions, as shown in the chart below, with the highest rate from authorities in the East Midlands (3 out of 3 distributed), South East (6 out of 6), East (3 out of 4), and North East (3 out of 4) regions.

² See appendix 1 for the questionnaire and covering letter.



Base = 33 authorities

3. Awareness of and attitudes towards *Aiming High* commitments

The questionnaire began by establishing respondents' awareness of the commitments made in *Aiming High*, and their authorities' plans to meet these. All respondents from first-tier authorities were aware of the commitments to devolving budgets included in *Aiming High*, and all but six said that their authority had started to consider how it would meet them. Over three-quarters of respondents (26) from first-tier authorities believed that the aim of devolving five per cent of youth service budgets was achievable in their authority, while around two thirds (21) thought that the target of devolving 25 per cent of positive activities budgets was achievable.

Respondents from three local authority areas are currently moving towards unitary status. While two respondents said that this would make it more difficult to meet the 2010 target, one also envisaged that the move to a unitary system would mean that devolved budgeting would be in place by 2018.

Only three first-tier authority respondents said that the 2010 target was not achievable (with the remaining respondents who did not say it was achievable offering qualifying statements rather than a definite 'no'). One stated that the youth service was committed to reach this target but faced difficulties since most of the budget was tied up as salaries, while another said that a target of 2011-12 would be more realistic, since the youth service would still be operating to its existing three-year plan in 2010. A further respondent stated that the 2010 target was not achievable, but went on to qualify this by saying it depended what was meant by 'devolving budgets'.

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Three respondents thought that the 2018 target was not achievable in their authority, including two of the three respondents identified above (but not the respondent who said that 2011-12 was more realistic). A further three respondents were unsure, and the remaining respondents did not answer directly but offered qualifying statements mainly relating to definitions (as did some of those who believed that the target was achievable).

Respondents made a range of comments concerning the targets. These included:

- The need to clarify definitions of positive activities and what was meant by devolving budgets. In particular, some respondents queried whether the five per cent target for youth services related to the total service budget or just to the positive activities element.
- A similar need for clarification was raised concerning what should be included in the 25 per cent target. One respondent suggested that the 25 per cent of positive activities budgets would 'be more feasible as a "Young People's Commission" which, with the right level of support and training would be potentially able to secure positive activities by acting as a quasi-commissioning team aligned to other commissioning processes within the authority.'
- A number of respondents to this and subsequent questions highlighted the difficulty of devolving budgets associated with a large proportion of fixed costs, particularly staffing. Two respondents, for instance, noted that staffing costs accounted for around 80 to 85 per cent of their youth service budgets. One of these stated that 'it would be more effective and strategic to devolve decision-making on 100% of budgets in one go, with a lead in time allowing for the training and development of young people.' Another said that the targets were only achievable if they included the role of young people in commissioning, recruitment and selection and involvement in decisions about accommodation in this context, since the youth service budget included less than five per cent for project expenditure, and devolving a 'pot' of money was therefore problematic.
- These and other respondents highlighted the need to distinguish between devolving specific sums of money to young people for activities and programmes, and developing mechanisms and structures for engaging young people in decision-making across whole services. One authority was described as having interpreted the concept of devolving 25 per cent of the budget as engaging youth council members in discussions about the 'whole budget including external funding, how it is comprised, how needs are identified and plans on how it may be spent.' These two approaches could exist alongside each other.
- Some respondents stressed the importance of partnerships and the challenge of getting 'buy-in' across two-tier councils and other council departments. One respondent highlighted a need for guidance on how to get partners to devolve budgets to young people if there is no statutory duty to do so.
- Some respondents stressed the importance of allocating adequate resources to support young people, while others highlighted the need to prepare service managers, fieldworkers and councillors for young people's financial decision-making.
- One respondent commented that the long term goal would require 'considerable changes to current practice', but that it should be achievable in five years rather than ten.

Among second-tier councils, two thirds (10) of respondents were aware of *Aiming High*. Although the targets are not directed to second-tier authorities, four district council respondents referred to working in partnership with their county council, and six highlighted their authorities' provision for children and young people and their involvement in decision-making.

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Respondents who said that their authority had started to consider how to meet the *Aiming High* commitments were asked to give details. Their approaches included:

- Building on the structures developed for distributing the **Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds** in their authority – the single most common response. Several responses indicated that their authority intended to develop arrangements to involve young people in the delivery of the local youth offer, including planning, governance, and commissioning activities.
- Several responses said that the success of the youth funds had led to other funds being devolved to young people. One authority intends to devolve two per cent of the youth service budget to steering groups of young people at each youth centre from 2008-09, with a view to increasing this amount each year. In another, young people in specific areas are responsible for distributing £30,000 of additional resources for positive activities, in a parallel process to YOF/YCF. Young people have also been involved in allocating funds through the Children's Fund, voluntary and community sector funding panels, neighbourhood renewal funding, and the extended activities budget.
- Building on **other participation structures** such as youth cabinets, youth councils and forums, youth scrutiny boards and annual youth conferences, as well as appointing specialist participation workers.
- Developing and implementing **participation strategies** developed through partnership work within authorities' children's trust arrangements and integrated youth support plans, and through the use of the Hear by Right standards for young people's involvement in decision making.

Practice example: Nottinghamshire County Council

Nottinghamshire County Council is in the process of setting up a Young People's Board (YPB) combining two groups – the Integrated Youth Support Board, consisting of Children and Young People's Services Cabinet members and staff, and young people from the existing Young People's Group. The group will meet for the first time in April 2008.

The majority of members of the YPB will be children and young people, representing a strong cross section of different groups including the UK Youth Parliament, the Children in Care Council, The Young Pioneers (representing young people with disabilities) and the Race Equalities Council. The YPB will be responsible for making strategic decisions and grant-making for the Youth Opportunity Fund. From 2009 it will also allocate funds from the Positive Activities for Young People programme and will be responsible for meeting the government's *Aiming High* commitment that five per cent of youth service budgets must be decided by young people.

Children and young people will be at the heart of decision making and will be responsible for all processes, from initial needs analysis to grant making and to monitoring and evaluation.

Practice example: Somerset YOF/YCF

Somerset Youth Opportunity Fund panel is a representative sample of young people including those from the local authority youth service, voluntary sector, care leavers and Youth Offending Team. All receive accredited training based on the YouthBank model. Young people developed the criteria for YOF allocations, and are responsible for all decision making supported by a youth worker. When considering applications through the Youth Capital Fund, young people consult with the youth service manager to avoid duplication and make links with the capital strategy priorities. The panel only considers applications that are presented by other young people. Over the next couple of years it intends to explore other funding sources to add to YOF (now called Somerset Youth Fund) resources.

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If resources permit, the one countywide panel may move to four local areas in the future. Locality Managers - who will be responsible for youth work from April 2008 - will be encouraged to give young people control of a proportion of locality budgets for youth provision. However this has yet to be discussed. But young people will be consulted on this proposal at an early stage to ensure that it is the right decision.

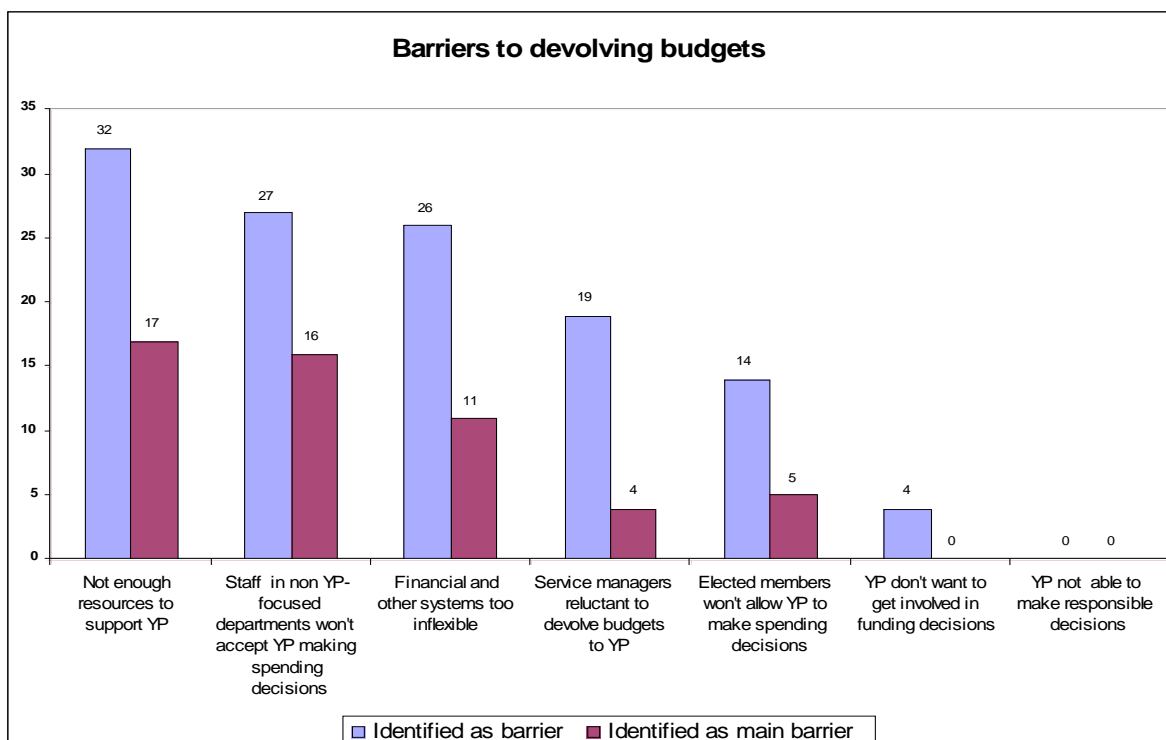
Young people are also involved on the Funding Panel allocating grants to voluntary youth groups. They are sent grant proposals in advance of the annual meeting. One YOF panel member and a member of the UKYP sat on the panel which recently allocated grants of approximately £160,000 for 2008/9.

4. Barriers to budget devolution

The questionnaire provided respondents with a list of potential barriers to devolving budgets. It asked them to select those that they thought were relevant, and identify up to three that they thought would be most difficult to overcome. The list covered the attitudes of service managers, elected members and staff in departments not focusing on young people; financial and other systems being too inflexible or complicated; young people not wanting to get involved in funding decisions or not being able to make responsible decisions; and there not being enough resources to support young people properly.

The most commonly identified barriers were a lack of resources to support young people properly (32 respondents), the attitudes of staff in departments not focusing on young people (27) and finance and other systems being too inflexible or complicated (26). The same three barriers came top of the list of those considered most difficult to overcome.

The barriers which were least often identified were those relating to young people. No respondents believed that young people would not be able to make responsible decisions and while four said that young people would not want to be involved in funding decisions, two made comments to qualify this. Some respondents did not identify any barriers, but it was not clear whether this was because they did not see any or simply had not answered this section. One respondent said that all the barriers listed could potentially pose problems, but that they could be addressed.



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Base = 48 respondents

Respondents were also asked to identify additional barriers. These can be grouped under the following headings:

- **Legal and financial constraints:** two responses stressed that young people's decisions on the allocation of funding could only be advisory under current local authority policy. Another stated that where local authorities have a statutory obligation to provide services, it may not always be possible to involve young people in spending decisions. One respondent identified challenges within the authority's financial regulations, but thought that these 'should not be insurmountable'.
- **Ensuring that robust and transparent structures** are in place to support young people's decision-making. One response noted that their authority's recent 'successful track record' had left it with a 'complex multi layer of participation routes which needs simplifying'. Another identified potential tension between elected members, community expectations and young people's decision-making.
- **Support and capacity building for young people:** respondents stressed the need to ensure that young people have sufficient information on which to base spending decisions, including assessing the needs of young people. It was noted that financial systems pose a barrier to youth workers as well as young people since their training has not focused on these skills. This would need to be addressed if they are to support young people being responsible for significant amounts of public funding.
- **Issues of representation:** young people making spending decisions may not be fully representative of their peer group, particularly vulnerable young people who tend not to get involved in decision-making processes.
- Concern that **new commissioning arrangements** would have a negative effect on the involvement of young people in decision-making; and
- Concern that **breaking up budgets** too much results in a loss of critical mass and economies of scale.

5. Information on positive activities spending

It rapidly became clear, from telephone and email communications with respondents and analysis of the responses received, that this questionnaire would not provide robust data on current spending on positive activities, and would therefore not meet the ambition of providing a baseline. It was also apparent that while respondents were able to identify a small number of spending areas in which young people had direct control of budgets, notably – as expected – the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds, in most cases their involvement was not quantifiable in money terms.

Despite the limitations of the data, there is evidence that local authorities are involving young people in spending decisions across a range of services. Particularly in services specifically for young people, it would appear that young people's views have significant influence over the facilities and activities provided in many authorities. The survey also provides some evidence of the involvement of young people in spending decisions within universal services, particular parks and play and libraries. The challenge is therefore to learn from good practice in different areas and services and replicate this more widely.

While most respondents highlighted the difficulty of collecting data across different services, a few said that their authorities were developing systems for collecting data across different services providing positive activities, and would therefore be in a better position to provide information in future. One respondent who was unable to provide information on positive activities spending within the authority's services for the whole population highlighted that

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'our IYSS Strategy has brought together all the relevant service providers and stakeholders to form a PAYP Strategy Group. The group is in the process of auditing PAYP activity across the board. This analysis will include an assessment of inputs, outputs and associated active involvement processes.' Another respondent said that their two-tier authority had worked hard over the past year to bring other county council directorates, district councils, the voluntary and community sector and private organisations together in a steering group to take forward the positive activities agenda.

5. 1. Services for young people

This section of the questionnaire asked for information on spending on youth services, the Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds, Positive Activities for Young People, Connexions, play services, volunteering and local authority support for extended school services. Information was mainly provided by first-tier authorities, although a small number of district councils provided some information on specific provision for children and young people.

Respondents were most likely to provide information on YOF/YCF, youth services spending and PAYP. However, it is clear that there are problems in comparing this information across authorities. When asked about youth services funding, for instance, most respondents provided figures for their total youth service budgets – in some cases giving approximations. However, some responses provide information on activities and programmes, rather than overall youth service budgets, while others excluded capital budgets. The questionnaire asked for data on spending in 2006-07, but some respondents provided it for different years. Some respondents also highlighted that youth service spending covered more than the 13-19 age group.

There were also inconsistencies in the data provided under other spending areas. The PAYP programme involves children and young people aged eight to 19, and many respondents were unable to provide separate figures for 13 to 19 year olds. Those authorities which directly support volunteering mainly did so through the Millennium Volunteers programme, which covers young people aged 16 to 25. There were also huge variations on amounts identified for Connexions spending – from a few thousand to millions of pounds – indicating considerable differences in what was included in these figures. All these caveats should be borne in mind in the following analysis of the data provided.

Youth services

Twenty-six out of the 33 first-tier authorities provided financial data on youth service spending, amounting to a total of £67,176,941, with a further three providing some information on the involvement of young people in decision-making but no financial data. As indicated above, this is likely to be an underestimate. While only ten respondents provided specific details of spending influenced by young people, a further 17 said that young people were involved in youth service spending decisions, but did not provide information on the amounts involved.

In six authorities, young people were reported to control a total of £120,000. This consisted of grants to YouthBanks of £50,000 and £10,000 in two authorities, £25,000 allocated to a young mayor programme, and budgets of £20,000, £10,000 and £5,000 managed by youth councils or similar bodies. A further four authorities reported that young people exercised choice over a total of £517,500. One respondent said that young people made decisions on most of the direct budgets for activities. Two respondents said that young people were involved in decisions on funding for voluntary and community sector groups, while a fourth said that young people exercised choice over £46,500 for grants, holiday activities and local

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projects. In one authority, youth centres had amenity budgets for equipment requested by young people, usually for amounts between £1,000 and £3,000.

Three authorities identified amounts over which young people were consulted, amounting to £336,600, generally related to programmes and activities. A further two authorities reported that young people were consulted on the total youth service budget (approximately £2m and £1.6m) and one highlighted young people's involvement in decisions on a £5 million capital spending programme.

Practice example: Norfolk Youth Scrutiny Panel

The Norfolk youth scrutiny panel is run by the Active Citizenship Team. It is a new panel which has met twice to date. It will consist of 20 core members representative of the county, including members from Connexions Youth Council, Norfolk Youth Parliament, and others including the 'In Care Council'.

Strongly supported by Norfolk County Council, the panel is designed to scrutinise the decisions of the county council and is young people led, with support from youth workers. It intends to focus on scrutinising youth service budgets and positive activities for young people. The panel will also participate in 'pre-scrutinies' to influence council decisions and policies prior to them going for county cabinet approval.

The panel has highlighted transport and improvements in Sex and Relationships Education as important issues for young people. Consequently the panel is working with the council to produce young people friendly SRE guidance, and examining the possibility of subsidising public transport.

Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds

Respondents were asked to report on YOF/YCF spending separately – this amounted to a total of £14,181,571 across the 33 authorities. While this figure amounts to approximately 20 per cent of reported spending on youth services, this percentage should be treated with caution bearing in mind the problems with the data indicated earlier. Only a minority of respondents referred to arrangements for support costs; three authorities excluded these from the total controlled by young people. All respondents identified the funds as being controlled by core groups of young people, in addition to offering opportunities for other young people to develop activities of their choice and to be consulted about local provision.

Practice example: Redbridge YOF

In Redbridge, 31 young people currently make up the Youth Opportunity Fund panel, which includes young people from LGBT groups, gypsies and traveller communities, Eastern European communities, young parents and carers, and those not in education, employment or training. Panel members intend to conduct a recruitment drive to increase this number to 60 and create three panels.

All panel members receive ten hours of training over three nights, covering budget management, needs analysis, monitoring, inspection, evaluation and recording outcomes.

The first round of YOF funding allowed young people to set up 'Raw'. Using a £5,000 YOF grant, ten groups of young people, representing the whole borough, organised a theatre production. Three hundred tickets were sold at £16 each, and all money raised was donated to charity. All the young people involved received AQA accreditation in live performance skills.

Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP)

Thirty-one respondents provided information on PAYP funding in their authority, amounting to a total of £8,680,242. Most of these – 26 respondents - said that young people were involved in spending decisions in this area, although only 11 provided details of the amounts

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influenced by young people. In three authorities, young people were said to control a total of £230,296. Most of this was accounted for by one authority, where young people were reported to control £202,296, through deciding on activities funded and the organisations sub-contracted to run them. In another authority, approximately five per cent of the PAYP budget (£23,000) was used for individual support packages determined by young people, while in another authority a sum of £5,000 was allocated to a peer youth workers project.

Eight respondents said that young people exercised choice over a total of £592,184 of PAYP budgets. Most respondents did not give specific details, but in one authority young people were said to be involved in choices on how to spend the budget, including deciding on the use of £9,538 as match funding for YOF bids. In another, young people were involved in planning all school holiday activity provision (£85,000), recruitment of keyworkers (£186,000) and accreditation choices (£1,000). In a third authority, looked after children and young people were said to be exercising choice in a keyworker project (£10,000). Eight respondents provided details of young people being consulted on specific amounts of PAYP spending, accounting for a total of £795,587. In most cases, this referred to consultation over programmes and activities. In one authority, approximately £45,000 was allocated each term to ASB 'hot spots' for provision requested by young people. In addition, one authority reported that £203,000 of its £357,746 PAYP budget was used for commissioning activities, and that young people could potentially be involved in spending decisions on the total activities budget.

These figures - even allowing for the inconsistencies highlighted above – would seem to suggest that young people are exercising some kind of decisions on spending on a relatively high proportion of PAYP budgets, at around 20 per cent. It may be that it is easier to identify young people's involvement in spending decisions in this kind of activity-based programme.

Connexions

Twenty-one respondents provided information on Connexions. However, as highlighted above, the variability of the information provided means that a reliable total figure can not be provided. Four respondents provided information on young people's involvement in making grants, for a total of £98,000. In two of these, young people made these funding decisions together with adults. In one authority, a young people's advisory board managed a budget of £5,000. Other responses referred to young people exercising choice or being consulted about Connexions services and programmes.

Practice example: Blackpool Connexions/Youth Service partnership

Young people in Blackpool, led by the LGBT group OK2B and representing other groups, identified the need for premises in a central location. After identifying that the basement of the Connexions building would be suitable, they gained funding from the Youth Capital Fund (held by the youth service) to develop part of the site, and obtained further funding from Connexions to develop the remainder. Forty per cent of the total costs were met by the YCF, and 60 per cent by Connexions.

With the centre youth worker, the young people have been involved in the entire process, including obtaining planning permission and discussions with building contractors. They recognised that the facility required disabled access, and therefore looked at the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act before agreeing to install a lift.

Once the facility is complete, the young people intend to consult their peers before furnishing it. They are also intending to commission an artist to create a work of art in the building.

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Play services and parks/open spaces

Thirteen respondents provided some information about play services. A further seven respondents provided information about provision for children and young people in parks and open spaces later in the questionnaire. However, as it appears that many councils link these two areas of spending they will be considered together. It should of course be recognised that provision will be intended for a broader age range than young people aged 13 to 19, although most did not specify the age range covered.

Play budgets identified came to a total of £3,981,950, while respondents identified spending of £300,260 on children and young people's provision in parks. Children and young people were said to influence spending decisions in twelve authorities, although in most cases no further information was given. One authority had a Children's Voices project, while in another children and young people were involved in choices about programmes, particularly holiday schemes, and were consulted on design and build and programme planning and delivery, with both elements accounting for approximately five per cent of the total budget (£25,000 each). The involvement of children and young people in developing Big Lottery Fund bids for play provision was highlighted in three authorities.

Play and parks provision is one of the main areas of activity for second-tier councils; seven district or borough councils reported spending on play and/or parks, with a total of £497,893. Young people were said to be consulted on spending in six of these councils, although most did not provide details. One district council reported that it consulted young people on new and replacement play equipment and outdoor youth facilities, with budgets ranging from £20,000 to £120,000, and that consultation budgets of £5,000 were available for each site (not included in the previous total spending figure).

Practice example: Bridgnorth District Council

Bridgnorth District Council Leisure and Amenity Services shapes its play, sports and parks services around the views of children and young people. They were involved throughout the development of the play strategy, influencing planning, development and the delivery process. This helped the council to determine the areas in need of investment.

For each project, local children and young people decided the type of facility required within the available budget, as well as selecting the contractor from the tenders received. They had to make compromises and difficult decisions in order for projects to be within budget, and consider other age groups and site users.

Project delivery is in its early stages, but the level of engagement and sense of anticipation demonstrates the community's desire for the projects.

The council also consulted young people on the branding for holiday sports ('Energized scheme') and physical activity schemes ('Xtreme'), and on how budgets were deployed, from the presentation and delivery of the activities to their location.

Consequently participation in these schemes has increased, and positive feedback is increasing. A recent independent satisfaction survey carried out on behalf of the council revealed an eight per cent increase in satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities and 12 per cent with parks and open spaces.

Volunteering

The questionnaire also asked for information on volunteering programmes, but only limited information was provided on this area. Eight respondents reported that their authorities supported volunteering programmes, either directly or through the voluntary and community sector. In most cases, these were MV programmes which, as indicated earlier, involve young people aged 16 to 25. Funding for these programmes amounted to a total of £775,299. While five respondents said that young people were involved in spending decisions, in most cases no further information was provided. Two respondents said that young people were

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consulted on the budgets and, in one of these programmes, had direct control over 10 per cent of the budget (around £1,100).

Extended schools

While the survey asked for information on local authority support for extended schools, only a few respondents were able to provide information about young people's involvement in spending on extended schools. One respondent said that £40,000 – around seven per cent of the budget – had been allocated to schools councils, while in another authority young people aged 11-14 had taken part in a national evaluation, and had been awarded a small budget of £1,500 to run their own consultation in schools. In one authority there were plans to involve young people in decision-making through recently established 'super councils' across clusters of schools, which will have their own small budgets.

5.2. Services for the whole population

This section of the questionnaire sought to gain information on provision for young people within universal services. It covered spending on sports, arts, other leisure services, libraries, museums, parks, community safety and regeneration. These spending areas will be discussed in turn. A small number of respondents, particularly those from district councils, also identified other areas of spending.

Many respondents commented on the difficulty of identifying spending specifically on young people within universal services and obtaining information across a range of departments and directorates. Seven respondents were unable to provide any information for this section of the questionnaire, and many more only provided limited information on one or two areas of spending.

The questionnaire asked for information on a) provision specifically for young people and b) the service's total budget and where this could be measured, the proportion of users who are young people. However, while some respondents provided some information on the second aspect, there is not enough useful data for analysis.

Where spending on young people has been specifically identified, there are major variations in the age ranges included with, for example, age ranges variously being identified as nine to 19, 10 to 14 and eight to 19 – and indeed different age ranges being used for different services and activities within the same authority. While totals have been given for spending on young people in different types of services, what this covers will therefore vary widely, so should only be seen as very broad indicators of spending. The figures may also be skewed by unusually high spending in a small number of authorities. It is not therefore possible to make comparisons with any rigour across authorities, or to extrapolate information on provision for young people aged 13 to 19. However, this section does indicate some spending areas where young people are involved in decisions in some authorities and the potential for this to be replicated in others.

Sports

Over a third of respondents (19) provided details of spending on sports activities and programmes for children and young people, amounting to a total of £1,536,448. While most respondents did not give details, different types of provision identified included leisure centre provision; specialist projects focusing on specific sports (from football to street funk dance) or targeting vulnerable young people; outdoor and adventurous activities; diversionary activities; holiday programmes; and youth games initiatives.

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While around two-thirds of these respondents (14) said that young people were involved in spending decisions, only three provided specific amounts. In one authority young people were consulted about £39,500 for sports provision, in another they were consulted about £4,000 spent on diversionary activity projects, and in the third about a £32,500 budget for school sports initiatives.

Arts

Around one-third of respondents (17) provided information on their authority's arts provision for young people, with total funding of £2,352,787. Provision under this heading included support for youth bands and orchestras, subsidies for arts organisations working with young people, circus skills training, weekend activities, young people led arts groups, and involvement in a national arts training programme.

Most of these respondents (14) said that young people were involved in spending decisions about arts provision, but few gave details. In one authority, which spent £35,000 on youth provision within arts and cultural development, young people were consulted on all spending, and controlled approximately £11,500 of this budget, including making decisions on tendering and commissioning artists and venues.

Practice example: Crawley Borough Council

ViYC (Vision in Youth Collective) young person's advisory group has been instrumental in shaping the council's youth arts programme. ViYC produces and markets four events a year with support from the Arts Service. The young people choose the arts and workshop programme within a given budget. ViYC is a very active group and has ensured that the youth arts programme is relevant to young people. Group membership is fluid, but there are between eight and 12 members at any one time.

Other leisure provision

Eight respondents provided information on other leisure provision for young people, amounting to £290,706 of funding. While most respondents did not specify what was included under this heading, activities identified included leisure and recreation programmes in district councils and specific project work, such as dance with young men and an orienteering course. Young people were said to be involved in spending decisions in five of these authorities, but no specific information was provided.

Libraries

Ten respondents provided information on library provision specifically for young people, amounting to £657,096. The scale of reported spending varied considerably among these authorities. In one authority, library provision for young people includes dedicated staffing, a book stock fund and a range of projects including homework support, a book award and library provision in a youth centre, where young people were responsible for spending the £10,000 stock budget. A total of £260,900 was spent on young people's provision in this authority.

Other respondents identified more modest spending, for instance allocating £3,800 of the book fund to purchase stock for young people aged 13 to 19. Young people were involved in spending decisions in six authorities. In one, the library service reserves a proportion of the book budget for groups of young people in different parts of the city to spend in partnership with library staff. Amounts for each group are usually between £1,000 and £2,000. One authority's library service was involved in the national *Fulfilling their Potential* initiative, and through this had received £750 to consult young people about its services.

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Practice example: Norfolk County Council libraries

A total of £146,369 was allocated to young people's services (covering dedicated staffing, teen stock, games, and activities including book groups, comic book days, card trading and an annual promotion of library services to young people). Young people also have access to all library facilities, including adult book stock, sound and visual services and free internet use, with all staff expected to support young people's library use. A notional value of £2,600,000 is placed on the use of these resources.

Young people are involved in decisions at a range of levels. They have full control of resources they spend on books and have their views on short-listed candidates applying for jobs taken into account. Youth audits or mystery shopping exercises have influenced spending, for instance leading to increased purchase of magazines. They test and influence the design of publicity, branding and web pages aimed at them. They are consulted on the design and delivery of services, equipment and furniture and, through focus groups of users and non-users, on new build and refurbished libraries.

Museums

Only five respondents provided details of museum initiatives specifically for young people. These included a 'renaissance in regions' initiative targeting young people up to 16, with a budget of approximately £238,400 and, in another authority, a range of informal learning programmes for young people. These included a museum club, young offenders' course and summer school, with an estimated budget of £20,000. Young people in this authority were described as having some choice over spending and were consulted over museum developments giving them some influence over large scale funding such as Heritage Lottery funds.

Community safety

Thirteen respondents identified a total of £1,762,311 on community safety provision for young people. Most (11 respondents) said that young people were consulted about this provision, but no specific examples of young people influencing spending decisions were provided. Their involvement tended to take the form of deciding on or being consulted about specific activities or programmes, and evaluating those that they take part in.

Regeneration

Although a small number of respondents identified regeneration or neighbourhood renewal initiatives, very little information specifically relating to young people was provided. However, U Decide, the young people's participatory budgeting initiative in Newcastle upon Tyne, was originally funded with neighbourhood renewal monies.

Practice example: U Decide, Newcastle upon Tyne

Newcastle upon Tyne is the only local authority in the national Participatory Budgeting pilot programme to have a specific focus on children and young people. Supported by the city's Investing in Children coordinator, U Decide has been used to identify ways children and young people can be involved in decisions on mainstream funding. Through schools and community projects, over 3,000 young people - five per cent of the city population – voted on priorities for the process in the current financial year. Over 300 children and young people have attended events to see different ideas presented and vote for the best ideas or projects, which then receive funding to go ahead. Projects proposed are checked prior to the event to ensure they can be supported by the authority. Children and young people are involved in organising the events as well as taking part in them.

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Initial funding came from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, with £30,000 allocated in 2007-07 and £110,000 in 2007-08. In its first year U Decide operated at city level, but there has now been a move towards more local decision-making – events in 2007-08 focused on localities, and six ward-based pilots are planned for 2008-09. With the ending of the NRF, the council now plans to use the process to involve children and young people in decisions about the Children’s Fund successor funding – worth £2.2 million – starting with an event planned for 22 May 2008. Children and young people will be central to the decision-making process, giving feedback on the priority issues, looking at how projects meet the criteria and contributing to decisions on which projects should be funded. The process was also used to shape the Newcastle bid to the Big Lottery Play fund last year.

Young people’s feedback has been uniformly positive, and the process has provided evidence that young people make good decisions when given responsibilities for funding on issues that affect them. Their involvement also adds value to adult decision-making around similar issues, such as the BLF bid.

Other spending areas

Finally, in this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they wished to highlight other areas of spending. This provided an opportunity for several district councils to provide information on their provision for children and young people. One highlighted a range of activity, including supporting a youth council with its own annual budget; complementing county council provision through providing extra opening hours for a youth information shop and leasing the premises (which it owned) at a peppercorn rent; discretionary grants for voluntary and community sector projects; and funding an annual youth survey to ensure young people’s views were included in council consultations. Other activities highlighted by district councils included youth awards schemes, community development work with young people on targeted estates and youth exchange projects.

Practice example: Cherwell District Council

The Bicester youth council was established in December 2007 and held its inaugural meeting in January 2008. The youth council, run by Bicester town council, consists of 14 young people representing the 11-18 age range drawn from two local schools, as well as a pool of eight co-opted members from other schools including special schools.

The youth council has a chair, vice-chair and treasurer, all of whom are young people who will be in control of a ring-fenced town council budget of approximately £3,000. The council will meet every six weeks. The young people are currently in consultation with the South West Bicester Development Agency over the Agency’s plans to build a new leisure complex in the district. The Agency has agreed to attend the next council meeting to present their development proposals which are at the planning stage.

Practice example: North Shropshire District Council

North Shropshire District Council held its first youth summit in June 2007. Some 60 young people from five schools, and local youth projects attended covering the 11-18 age group. The summit was funded by the council and organised by a working group chaired by young people.

The summit had several purposes including: to raise awareness about district council services; find out how young people thought money should be allocated; and find out how young people wished to engage with councillors. £20,000 had been allocated by councillors for youth pods – instead £5,000 was used for the summit, and for the remaining £15,000, bids were invited for projects where young people had identified what they wanted. As a result, in one case the councillors learnt that young people wanted more football facilities so one parish ‘donated’ a field and the fund paid for goalposts.

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The council has always viewed young people as one of its key user groups so wanted their views on its funding priorities for the year. The priorities identified were homelessness, community safety, swimming facilities, affordable housing and things to do. Council spending in these areas has subsequently increased and the young people's views – which were recorded as a DVD with music and animation produced on the day - have fed into the council's first youth strategy.

Access to public transport was also highlighted during the summit and subsequently the council has publicised funding for youth groups of '£500 for a trip' and made grants across a range of projects including for younger children.

The second summit will be held in July 2008 and will focus on 'intergenerational equity.' Before the summit young people will create short films in their communities, speaking to older people of all ages to identify the key issues which will help to set priorities during the summit itself to aid community cohesion. The working groups of young people include those involved in the first youth summit which has led to increased input.

Practice example: Derwentside District Council

Derwentside District Council, which was awarded Beacon status for positive youth engagement in 2006-07, allocates £15,000 a year to its young people's forum, which has been in existence for seven years. This forum, which is democratically elected to represent all the wards in the district, undertakes a wide range of activities, including taking part in budgetary decisions, consultations with young people on behalf of the council and its partners, and running a series of youth projects including a youth bus.

The council also draws on additional funding to support SPICE (The Special Programme for the Implementation of Children's Elections), which aims to promote active citizenship among young people. Over the past two years, it has secured £60,000 for SPICE from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Children's Fund. This money has been allocated by young people to support other youth projects, through the Spice It Up grants scheme.

Derwentside Council has just won the 'Engaging with Young People Award' in the first ever government awards for the North East. The judges commented that 'the SPICE campaign generated positive responses to all issues raised and ensured young people felt they had been really listened to and successfully engaged with. They have fully participated with Derwentside District Council which has successfully acted upon their work, opinions and concerns.'

6. Next steps

It was clear from the issues raised by respondents that more work is needed on defining what is meant by positive activities, and which budgets are covered. More thought is also needed about the concept of devolving budgets, and whether this will encourage young people's involvement in spending decisions across the full range of positive activities and the services which underpin them. There is also a need to develop approaches which can provide robust spending data across a range of services and departments. This will be a particular challenge for services which do not have a specific focus on young people.

The NYA convened the seminar in May 2008 to build on the findings of the survey and explore further the issues related to positive activities and budget devolution. Section 3 is the report from the seminar.

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Annex 1: survey respondents

Local authority	Authority type	Region	Job title of respondent	Provided information on young people's services	Provided information on general services
Barnet	L	London	Divisional Manager Youth & Connexions Service	√	√
Blackpool	U	NW	Principal Youth Officer	√	√
Bolton	Met	NW	Development Manager – Positive Contribution	√	x
Bridgnorth	DC	WM	Head of Leisure and Amenity Services	x	√
Broadland	DC	E	Chief Executive	x	√
Burnley	DC	NW	Director of Community Services	√	√
Calderdale	Met	Y & H	Group Director, Children and Young People's Services	√	√
Cherwell	DC	SE	Senior Recreation Development Officer (Play & Young People)	x	√
Chesterfield	DC	EM	Policy Officer	√	√
Chichester	DC	SE	Senior Community Engagement Officer	√	√
Colchester	DC	E	Finance Manager (Management Accounting)	x	√
Coventry	U	WM	Neighbourhood Manager, Children, Learning & Young People	√	√
Crawley	DC	SE	Community Services Children & Young Peoples Services and Arts Development Officer	√	√
Derbyshire	CC	EM	Head of Youth Services	√	√
Durham	CC	NE	Youth Service Manager	√	√
East Riding of Yorkshire	U	Y & H	Director of Children, Family and Adult Services	√	√
Epping Forest	DC	E	Community & Culture Services Manager	x	√
Essex	CC	E	Service Manager Targeted Youth development	√	√
Gateshead	Met	NE	Youth & Community Learning Manager (Youth)	√	√
Gedling	DC	EM	Head of Leisure Services	x	√

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Greenwich	IL	London	Head of Youth and Play Service	√	x
Hillingdon	OL	London	Head of Youth and Connexions Service	√	x
Leicester	U	EM	Head of Young people's Support Services	√	√
Lewisham	IL	London	Head of Youth and Adventure Play Service	√	√
Manchester	Met	NW	Assistant Director Children's Services	√	√
Milton Keynes	U	SE	Children, Youth and Play Manager	√	√
Newcastle	Met	NE	Investing in Children Coordinator	√	√
Norfolk	CC	E	Head of Youth Strategy	√	√
North Shropshire	DC	WM	Senior Policy Officer	x	√
Norwich	DC	E	Children Young People and Play Manager	x	√
Nottinghamshire	CC	EM	Head of Youth Support Service	√	√
Oldham	Met	NW	Head of Youth Service	√	√
Oxford City	DC	SE	Partnerships Manager	√	x
Oxfordshire	CC	SE	Service Manager - Youth support Services	√	√
Redbridge	OL	London	Chief Officer	√	√
Richmondshire	DC	Y&H	Head of Finance	x	√
Sheffield	Met	Y & H	Youth Strategy Manager	√	x
Shropshire	CC	WM	Principal Youth Officer	√	√
Slough	U	SE	Youth Service Manager	√	√
Somerset	CC	SW	Group Manager – Youth Services	√	√
South Norfolk	DC	E	Head of Corporate Affairs	x	√
Southampton	U	SE	Acting Head of Youth Services	x	x
Stoke on Trent	U	WM	Acting Head of Youth and Play Services	√	√
Torbay	U	SW	Principal Youth Officer	√	√
Sutton	OL	London	Head of Youth Service	√	√
Wandsworth	IL	London	Head of Youth Work Service	√	x
West Berkshire	U	SE	Youth Service Development Manager	√	√
West Sussex	CC	SE	Principal Youth Officer	√	√

Section 3: Report of Budget Devolution Seminar

1. Overall Purpose

Sent in advance

To inform DCSF thinking on the budget devolution commitment in the Youth Strategy³ and to contribute towards a robust definition⁴ of positive activities and young people's involvement, for use in measuring the extent to which budgets are being devolved locally.

Amended nearer the day

The intention of the day was to build on the findings of the budget devolution scoping survey and take it further towards the setting of a baseline and the development of guidance. The DCSF confirmed that the decisions in the sentence above will apply to both the targets in the Youth Strategy - 5% by 2010-11 and 25% by 2018-19. The seminar sought to complete the sentence:

'At least 5%/25% of local authority [budgets / spend / resources] for [youth services / positive activities / services for young people] should be [controlled / influenced / shaped] by young people by 2010-11 / 2018-19.'

2. Desired Outcomes

1. For DCSF to clarify the intent behind the 25% target for budget devolution set out in the Strategy.
2. To establish more clearly what level of influence it is feasible for young people to have over the budgets for positive activities in their local areas.
3. To identify so far as possible which budgets for positive activities it is sensible to include/exclude for the purposes of calculating the percentage of budgets devolved.

3. Delegates

- Number – 29 delegates attended with four speakers/facilitators and two additional facilitators including an officer from the DCSF.
- Role – 1 Head of Leisure and Amenity Services from a District Council, 4 accountants/finance officers, 1 Research Officer from the DCSF and the rest were managers in youth (and community services).
- Authorities – 25 people from 23 authorities. County Councils - 7; unitaries including metropolitan authorities -14 ; second tier – 2.
- Voluntary organisations – 3 (a fourth person left before the event started.)

4. Headline findings from the seminar

The completed sentence with which we concluded the seminar was: *At least 5%/25% of local authority (unitary, first tier and second tier) budgets for services for young people should be actively shaped by young people with evidence of this.* (There was a query about 'at least' as AYP says 'up to'.)

³ See relevant extracts from Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities on Task sheet 1 Appendix 3.

⁴ Noting links with PSA 14 and with section 507B of the Education Act 1996 as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which came into force on January 2007 and is supported by statutory guidance.

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With the ending of JARS, mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that young people's decision making is a focus of future inspection and assessment processes.

Section 52, once through the current process of 'cleaning up' could provide some data which it would make sense to use and this could be referred to in the guidance.

5. Further points illuminating this are set out below.

'should be [controlled / influenced / shaped] by young people by 2010-11 / 2018-19'

There was **strong support** amongst participants for the ambition of the government for young people to have greater control over services provided for them.

Most of the groups recommended a **tailored tool** based on Hear by Right for self assessment of budget devolution as key in delivery of this policy. This completed self assessment could be included as part of the self-assessment for the CAA.

Control (over budget or pot of money)

Every authority should have a budget or pot of money over which young people have control, in the sense that they do now over YOF and YCF. The control of YOF and YCF sits within parameters of the law for financial management in LAs, the priorities of the CYPP and the stipulations and criteria in the DCSF revised guidance on YOF and YCF. YOF and YCF will be provided as a ring fenced budget from central government until at least 2011. Given that within most budgets for services for young people, certainly for youth service budgets to date, there is very little unallocated money or project funding, the amount possible beyond 2011 is likely to be much smaller than the current YOF/YCF allocations. The vast majority of budgets are committed year on year to staffing and facilities. Short of making staff redundant, freeing these funds is very difficult. Externally raised funds may assist provision of such project budgets. Thus *control* of some funds was recommended to be part of the definition of budget devolution but this would sit within a wider definition of *actively shaping*.

Actively shaping

Given the responsibility of elected members in law for *control* of the finances of the local authority, *actively shaping* was generally supported as an accurate term, which could meet the ambitions of the policy, although there were concerns, not least from voluntary sector participants, that this might be used to seriously dilute the power of young people. In addition, delegates agreed that each authority should also have a pot of money, which young people control, as with YOF and YCF.

Actively shaping should occur and be evidenced at two levels:

- a strategic level at the point of setting priorities – allocation of available funding to which priorities and in which geographical areas. Information from the needs analysis for the CYPP and the CYPP itself and other considerations would be taken into account as it is at present with YOF and YCF.
- an operational level – where young people affect the implementation of decisions made at a strategic level. For example, staffing needs and locations are decided at the strategic level and recruitment decisions are operational; or type and location of facilities are strategic and design of the building, furnishings, equipment, rules, activities are operational.

The Hear by Right standards tool would set out the level of engagement which falls within 'control' and within 'actively shaping' and would ask for evidence of this

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happening and of the difference made. It is essential that young people are listened to and know where their views were implemented and where not. If not, an explanation of why should be provided. (Note: this was the view of the meeting – no discussions have been held at The NYA on this at this stage.)

There was a high level of agreement that the local authority should ensure there is a menu of mechanisms through which young people are empowered for budget devolution. All these mechanisms will need to operate in ways that mean young people from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities are included, particularly those who do not usually engage in these decisions or who are disadvantaged. This menu will reflect the higher levels of the ladder of participation, as described in Hear by Right. Mechanisms for this menu proposed by attendees at the seminar included:

- Some involving relatively small groups of young people (tens) who are prepared, trained and supported to take on the responsibilities of budget devolution, including: youth cabinet, scrutiny panels making elected members accountable, elected youth councils, young inspectors/assessors of services, youth fora, UKYP and MYP and YOF/YCF decision making panels.
- Others drawing out the views of hundreds of young people on high level priorities, including through surveys on priorities, perception surveys like TellUs 2 and 3, focus groups led by peers and specific YOF consultations.
- Further examples drawing out the views of tens of young people in a local area, including:
 - local youth fora and other representative groups, local YOF decision making groups
 - local YOF project leaders, local area based issue groups and peer mentors doing research and consultation in schools.
- Some locally based mechanisms focusing on specific provision, including: young people on the management committee or forming the management committee of a club or a voluntary sector group/organisation e.g. The Young Farmers and YouthBank.

for [youth services / positive activities / services for young people]

The survey and a further meeting with respondents led to the development of criteria for the decision on which services will be the focus of the budget devolution targets. These are set out in the box below.

In small groups please discuss and decide which of the three possible targets you recommend to the DCSF would:

- best meet the intention of the policy

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- delivers the policy intention of the government that young people should have a real say on services for young people across a wide ambition
- is one for which it is possible to provide data and that data is comparable between authorities.

The most ambitious long term goal suggested for services to be included in budget devolution was the whole range of services both provided and secured by the local authority for children and young people. In two tier authorities, services provided by district councils will need to be included in the data collection to be comparable with unitary authorities.

A narrower goal than this but still ambitious, which was supported by most of the participants, was all children and young people's services (aged 0-19 and up to 24 for those with learning disabilities) within the Children's Trust.

On the way to these goals bearing in mind the Aiming High timescales, there was support for the focus of this budget devolution policy to be services for young people rather than positive activities. It was felt services for young people best met the criteria set out above.

However, for the 2011 target date, there was also an argument that focusing on Integrated Youth Support (and Development) Services (IYS(D)S), mandatory from April 2008 would be a realistic and viable first step on this journey. Services outside IYS(D)S would not be included but this option would test out delivery of the policy and the definitions and data collection methods before widening the definition to services for young people. One reason underpinning this view was that in many authorities youth services do not exist as distinct bodies since youth work is offered within IYSDS.

One group advocated that positive activities should be the focus for budget devolution. However, others' view was that the practicalities mean that only those services provided by or funded by the local authority to 13-19 year olds where the funding for this age range is disaggregated from the rest of the population could be included. This would give such a partial picture that it would not deliver the ambition of the policy. It would also leave out good work done by partners with the local authority in delivering positive activities.

Collecting data on services defined as for young people was thought to be realistic, enabling the inclusion of data from any department within the local authority or any organisation funded by it that provides services for young people. For example, a library session designed for young people, a health service for young people only or a sports leadership course for 13-19 year olds. Inclusion of the services provided by these bodies would be both desirable and feasible compared with the difficulty of providing evidence on universal services to all ages in the population.

budgets / spend / resources

There was strong support for a monetary aspect to the target. The majority view seemed to be that the definition to be used in the guidance has to be 'budgets' to secure young people's involvement in the strategic level of decision making before allocation of resources for spend. This includes involvement in the decision making process on priorities in relation to needs analysis. Evidence will be gained of the actual difference made by looking at spend. Resources, such as decisions about staffing and facilities, are included in 'budgets' – budgets do not mean only unallocated funds/cash. It was agreed that the term 'budget' included expectations that young people would actively shape resources such as location and recruitment of staff or decisions about facilities.

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However, there were some strong arguments in favour of 'spend' being the focus in the guidance. The assessment and data collection would be based on what happened rather than what was intended.

6. **Conclusion**

The seminar provided a steer through the issues posed by the budget devolution scoping survey. Although, there was support for the ambition and intention of the policy, the diverse opinions meant consensus was not reached. However, a much stronger understanding of what could work emerged. The mix of participants had a productive, lively debate on the balance between keeping to the intention of the policy for the empowerment of young people and being pragmatic about demonstrating delivery to a target.