

Consultation Unit
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Ground Floor B
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2 March 2009

Dear colleagues

21st Century Schools

The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England. A diverse network of over 170 national voluntary youth organisations and regional and local youth networks, NCVYS has been working since 1936 to raise the profile of youth work, share good practice and influence policy that has an impact on young people and the organisations that support them.

NCVYS co-ordinates a Youth Policy Exchange (YPE) group comprising of member organisations who discuss current policy issues surrounding young people. This joint submission to *21st Century Schools: A World-class Education For Every Child* includes an additional endorsement from Community Matters.

NCVYS urges Government to continue dialogue with the voluntary and community sector in this continuously developing policy area.

Yours sincerely



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21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child

Department for Children, Schools and Families

A response from the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)

February 2009

Introduction

1. The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England. A diverse network of over 170 national voluntary youth organisations and regional and local youth networks, NCVYS has been working since 1936 to raise the profile of youth work, share good practice and influence policy that has an impact on young people and the organisations that support them.
2. The NCVYS network reflects the diverse range of voluntary organisations working with young people at community, local, regional and national level. Most of our members offer opportunities to engage in challenging activities or develop creative talents. They also support young people to become active in their communities and offer opportunities for their voice to be heard. Some offer interventions to prevent or tackle specific issues such as homelessness or offending behaviour. Others offer counselling, advice, guidance and information. All contribute to young people's personal and social development; some also engage with spiritual development.
3. For more information on any element of this paper, please contact NCVYS's Policy Officer, Hannah Dobbin on 020 7278 1041.

Key comments

4. NCVYS welcomes the opportunity to comment on *21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child*¹ and facilitate a co-ordinated response from the voluntary and community youth sector (VCYS). This section focuses on NCVYS's response to 21st Century Schools and implications for the VCYS.
5. 21st Century Schools advocates a 21st century school system which is more outward-facing and works closely with partners, including the third sector. The basis for partnership working with the third sector will stem from meaningful engagement, and decisions made, in the local strategic bodies, such as Children's Trusts and Children and Young People's Plans (CYPP)². It is therefore essential that the aims of 21st Century Schools are joined-up with local strategic aims and that the VCYS is fully involved in decision-making.
6. As recommended by NCVYS³, and recognised in the latest DCSF CYPP Guidance, local voluntary and community sector infrastructure bodies can represent the sector on local bodies to ensure that the sector's voice is heard.
7. The recognition that all children and young people, including those with additional needs, should be able to achieve their full potential is welcomed. The VCYS often has unique experience and skills of supporting the most disadvantaged young people and those with additional needs. Collaborative working by schools and local authorities (LAs) with the VCYS would hopefully ensure that all young people are given the best support possible.
8. More specifically, through the extended schools agenda⁴, schools are increasingly becoming linked-up with other service providers. As 21st Century Schools highlights, the extended schools programme has supported a holistic approach to supporting young people, with volunteering being given as an example of an activity provided by the programme. The VCYS is in a unique position to engage with young people and can make a valuable contribution to the delivery of extended schools. This is a valuable opportunity to link up with local schools and practice in this area needs to be increased to ensure more holistic approaches to supporting young people locally. This has resource implications for schools and voluntary and community sector providers and also relies on a sound knowledge from both sides about what can be offered or is already available locally. Additional local investment here is something that would be welcomed by the sector to help them engage in this agenda and thereby help contribute to the extended services agenda more meaningfully where this is not already the case.
9. The importance of the VCYS and its links with the wider community and contribution to community objectives, such as local cohesion, is another key reason why VCYS organisations need to be fully involved in local strategic planning and have links with schools. This will help to ensure that young people are fully supported by a range of services, working together to provide them with the best support possible. While Children's Trust arrangements are one way of facilitating engagement other local partnership arrangements need to allow for voluntary sector involvement where possible. For example

¹ Further information on the DCSF consultation on 21st Century Schools and A School Report Card is available via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1584&external=no&menu=1>

² NCVYS's responses to recent DCSF consultations around Children's Trusts and Children and Young People's Plan are available via: <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=273>

³ NCVYS's briefing paper on the CYPP Guidance 2009 is available via:

<http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=361>

The Guidance itself is available via:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/planningandcommissioning/cypp/>

⁴ Further information on extended schools is available via:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/extendedschools/>

some areas have partnerships between schools and the local authority to ensure joined up working around key issues such as safety in schools e.g. crime reduction partnerships / community safety partnerships / safer schools partnerships or local school governance boards. These partnerships should be open to voluntary sector engagement to ensure that opportunities to link in are maximised.

Additional comment

10. VCYS strategic engagement with LAs around schools will link into local Children's Trusts. NCVYS recognises that the VCYS has a responsibility to proactively engage with LAs and Children's Trusts. To this end the Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People (2006) produced two documents³. The first, *talking trusts*, is aimed at statutory agencies and sets out straightforward recommendations encouraging Children's Trusts to do more to engage with voluntary and community sector partners, especially small organisations who are doing critical work with children or young people on the ground. The second, *Community Involvement in Children's Trusts – Unlock your potential*, is a counterpart document offering guidance for community and voluntary organisations delivering services to children or young people on how to engage effectively with children's trusts.
11. Such resources need to be recognised and supported by Government in order develop communication and understanding between sectors. Resources produced by the VCYS might also be more likely than government publications to reach small voluntary organisations who are vital service deliverers and able to represent often the most hard to reach young people.

**Endorsement of the National Council for
Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) response to:**

**21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child,
Department for Children, Schools and Families – February 2009**

1. Community Matters is the nationwide federation for community associations and similar organisations, with more than 1162 member organisations across the UK. Established in 1945, Community Matters has played a key role in promoting and supporting action by ordinary people in response to social, educational and recreational needs in their neighbourhoods and communities.
2. We welcome this opportunity to comment on *21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child*¹ and are writing to strongly endorse the response from the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS).
3. The majority of our members are volunteer-led, neighbourhood-based, multi-purpose community organisations that own or manage a community centre. These community organisations provide critically important spaces, support and services, sometimes in places and serving people other services struggle to reach. Through their community-led work, these organisations contribute to raising aspirations and building links between generational groups, which contributes to wider objectives such as raising attainment and community cohesion².
4. We believe, like NCVYS, that it is critically important that 21st Century Schools, local strategic bodies and extended schools are encouraged to work collaboratively and strategically with voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, if young people are to be given the best possible support locally. We therefore strongly endorse the response and recommendations submitted by NCVYS.
5. In particular, we would like to highlight that we strongly agree and support NCVYS on the following recommendations:

¹ Further information on the DCSF consultation on 21st Century Schools and A School Report Card is available via:
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1584&external=no&menu=1>

² Further information on Raising Attainment and Aspirations in deprived communities, to which we contributed, is available via:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/short_studies/aspirations.a.spx

- a. That it is important that partnerships between local authorities, schools and VCS organisations are encouraged and supported so that they are based on meaningful engagement and collaborative working.
 - b. That this is an important opportunity for schools to link up with VCS organisations to ensure a more holistic approach for young people. As VCS organisations engage with young people, they are in a unique position to make a valuable contribution to the delivery of extended services and ensuring the best possible support for young people. This collaborative between schools and VCS organisations would require an investment to support VCS organisations, but in doing so this would contribute to wider objectives such as community cohesion.
 - c. That the Government recognise and support publications written by and for the voluntary and community sector as these resources are accessible to, and reach many small voluntary and community sector organisations, and therefore develop communication and understanding between sectors³.
6. If you would like any more information on any element of this endorsement and/or the Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People (CSPCYP), please contact, Nina Burich, National Youth Programmes Manager, Community Matters and main contact for the CSPCYP on 020 7837 7887.

³ For example, the Community Sector Partnership for Children and Young People (CSPCYP) Talking Trusts publications, which are available via:

http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/Projects/children_and_young_people/CSPCYP.htm