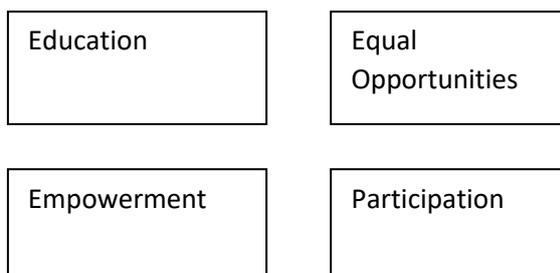


Stroud District Council's Youth Work Engagement Process

The Four Corners of Youth Work

Whilst local and national policy rarely refers to the 'four corners of youth work' when discussing youth work, it is very much still part of practice and therefore should be understood by local decision-makers and community stakeholders.



All youth work practice should relate to all 'four corners', to varying degrees.

Different types of youth work provision

Youth work can sometimes be difficult to define as a practice. However it is best to outline the different types of youth work provision before considering what type would be most suitable for a community. The following are a guide to the different types that can be considered when planning your provision;

- **Centre based / drop in** (young people come and go as they wish)
- **Outreach** (linked to centre based work, ideal for recruitment)
- **Street based / detached** (no venue; work is done outside and where young people 'hang out')
- **Issue based project work** (using a venue but focusing on specific projects only)
- **Youth Participation** (in Stroud district: local youth forum groups and Stroud District Youth Council exist to provide a system and structure for all other types of youth provision to feed into)

Our Approach

We engage with predominantly young people between the ages of 11 and 18.

Our engagement approach is outlined in the Council's Youth Work Strategy and is based on both the context of youth work and the context of youth participation, as a type of youth work. We also use the term 'youth voice', which essentially is the same as youth participation but often deemed as a more user friendly term.

Foremost when it comes to our engagement, young people interact with the Council's youth work staff in a voluntary capacity – similar to all types of youth work, it allows them to have

ultimate autonomy over when they engage and for how long. However we do have systems and structures in place that shape our overall approach – these include following safeguarding policy and guidelines as well as the Council’s dedicated strategy.

Our techniques to engage with young people depends on the environment (or types of youth work provision) that we are operating in – focus is on building or maintaining meaningful, trustworthy relationships with young people. Below is a guide as to how we operate in each environment;

Centre Based – this would typically see SDC youth workers visit youth centre’s or clubs to get to know the youth workers (from other agencies) who are running the centre provision and to meet / engage with young people. Our purpose is to learn about their needs and issues of concern, plus to offer opportunities to join our youth forum groups. We would do this with an agreed plan depending on our programme for the said locality and that of the centre-based provision.

Street Based or Detached – whilst not a typical approach by us initially, it may be used at various times e.g. when looking to assist a community with concerns over young people congregating in groups and potentially (or actually) causing anti-social behaviour. However, the approach would be a positive advocacy one, not akin to enforcement. As an example, we would visit the location on one or two occasions without making the first approach to speak to young people – this would allow us to be informal and non judgemental, allowing young people to become familiar with us. On the third or fourth occasion we would seek to have conversations with young people and introduce ourselves, stating our professional identity and reason for being there.

School Based – engagement in schools is to enable us to meet and support young people and teachers with regards to student voice programmes. This involves the schools listed in our youth work strategy and featuring on our youth voice vehicle (system and structure) diagram. Our engagement approach is still informal but obviously the environment is formal, therefore we recognise and adapt accordingly. It’s likley that we would initially talk to large groups of young people (students) as directed by the school and then graduate to those students expressing further interest in student voice or our locality based youth forum groups. We would visit each school on an agreed schedule.

Community Youth Project / Events – we would engage with young people using various approaches similar to those explained above but dependant on the environment and project / event theme. The event or project may be a ‘one off’ so would typically see youth workers make the first move to speak to young people, whereby we would introduce ourselves stating our professional identity and reason for being there. Its likley that we would offer information leaflets and expression of interest forms.

What happens after successful initial engagement?

Once young people have expressed an interest in working with us, we would obtain parent/guardian consent (using the official form) and record these details on our database. We would then typically invite them to a youth voice group meeting that's relative to them.

On the rare occasions that only one young person wishes to meet, we would inform them that they are as such and give them the option to postpone the meeting. If they still wish to meet, we would ensure this was either in a public space/place or a youth related venue which they are familiar with.

Enabling young people to become part of the relevant group as soon as possible is a milestone in our approach to maintaining meaningful and trustworthy relationships with them.

Outcomes for young people

The outcomes of our work are broadly explained under 'Youth Participation in Context'. However we specifically seek to enable young people to develop personally and socially through our programmes and opportunities. We measure these outcomes using The Catalyst Framework for Young Peoples Outcomes, which includes the following indicators defined as 'clusters of capabilities' that are of value to young people;

Communication

Confidence & Agency

Planning & problem Solving

Relationship & Leadership

Creativity

Resilience & Determination

Managing Feelings