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Youth Work Research: Initiatives in the study of
young people, youth work and Youth Services

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study is the product of a two year action research project with the Norfolk Youth and Community Service from 1989 to 1991. The research ideas were developed with the Wakefield Youth Service from 1992 to 1993. The climate in the Youth Service was one of review and change.

The field-work took place concurrent with an emerging body of literature, which the curriculum debate stimulated. There are three themes: creating access within research for young people; developing youth work practice through research; and developing policy in the Youth Service.

The main activities were a census of youth workers' views, a series of projects involving young people and a sample survey of young people, employing young people as interviewers and, later, engaging with young people during the interpretation stage. The study makes tentative steps towards the development of research which is meaningful to young people themselves.

The findings are grouped around youth work content, process, the youth work relationship and the nature of youth provision. The study makes a contribution to understanding of three particular youth work modes - association, responding to young people's interests and dealing with anxieties. It enhances comprehension of young people's informal learning experiences, of the importance of young people to one another and of the young person-adult relationship, which have broad youth work implications.

The conclusion holds that youth work is a craft, rather than a process or a method. It is comprised of tasks to be undertaken, techniques to be employed and tensions to be managed with the integrity of the practitioner. An argument is presented for youth work research which is compatible with youth work itself.

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FIGURES

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

APYCO	Assistant Principal Youth and Community Officer
AYCO	Area Youth and Community Officer
BYC	British Youth Council
CC	County Council
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DES	Department of Education and Science
DSP	Department of Social Policy
DPYCO	Deputy Principal Youth and Community Officer
DYCO	Divisional Youth and Community Officer
DYO	District Youth Officer
EARAC	East Anglian Regional Advisory Council for Further Education
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
MDC	Metropolitan District Council
JNC	Joint Negotiating Council (on the terms and conditions of youth workers and community centre wardens)
NACYS	National Advisory Council for the Youth Service
NALGO	National Association of Local Government Workers
NYCS	Norfolk Youth and Community Service
NYA	National Youth Agency
NYB	National Youth Bureau
PYCO	Principal Youth and Community Officer
PYO	Principal Youth Officer
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YSDC	Youth Service Development Council
YT	Youth Training

CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH SETTING

A Short History of the Youth Service

The Youth Service of 1988 had its roots in voluntary work with young people which began to be formalised alongside the dramatic increase in England's urban population in the mid nineteenth century. The country's economy was industrialising fast. Voluntary organisations, many of which were aligned with the Church, were concerned for the social, moral and spiritual welfare of young people in the factories and in service. Youth work, with elements which today's youth workers would find familiar, existed in the nineteenth century (see Stanley, 1890). The intentions and the underlying values of the work described by Stanley would be unacceptable in the Youth Service of the 1990s, but the compassion she felt for the young women she worked with, the style of organisation she strove for and the methods she employed are not unlike those still aspired to (Spence, 1991).

The years of the 1914-18 war were years of grave Government and public concern about the physical fitness of boys and young men, for this was tomorrow's army. There was also public anxiety about a perceived rise in juvenile crime; this image was set, with powerful effect, against another, that of father, the disciplinarian, away from home and fighting at the front. Physical fitness and discipline were thus amongst the prime interests of the uniformed youth organisations, many of which were born then, at the start of the twentieth century, and though ailing, survive still (Jeffs, 1979).

'Scouting for Boys' (Baden-Powell) was first published in 1908. The functions of scouting in the early days has been long debated (Uncredited Review, 1991). There is evidence that it maintained class divisions while giving some working class boys opportunities according to merit. It offered training but there is debate about whether it was for the military or for citizenship. It required that boys conform but act on their initiative. Baden-Powell was certainly a paternalist, but one with compassion (ibid.).

He believed in chivalry, patriotism and generosity. There are elements of scouting in the early part of the twentieth century which continue to be reflected in youth work. Scouting involved working with groups of young people (patrols) and these had a role in making decisions and organising. Personal achievement was valued, through non-competitive badges. Camping and woodcraft were elements of the curriculum. The last scouts' edition of 'Scouting for Boys' was published in 1963, three years after the publication of Albemarle.

Conscription into the armed forces of men, aged 18 and over, was not ended, despite mounting pressure, until the mid 1950s. Young people, under the age of 18, were consequently of vital economic importance, during and after the 1939-45 war, both to their families and to the nation. It was an era in which young people were soldiers and breadwinners, both of which are adult roles.

There was, at the outbreak of war in 1939, Government and public concern about juvenile crime, as there had been in the 1914-18 war, but the action sought by Government from Local Authorities (LAs), in respect of young people, was concerned with all round development and character building. Prevention of juvenile delinquency had not completely slipped from the picture but this was nevertheless a significant change in youth policy. In 1939, the Government's Board of Education issued Circular 1416, 'Service to Youth' which established a National Youth Committee and requested LAs to set up local bodies with representation from Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and from voluntary youth organisations. This was followed, before the end of 1940, by two further Government Circulars, 1516 'The Challenge of Youth', making available grants to national voluntary organisations, and 1577, requiring all 16 and 17 year olds to register with their LEAs. None of these had a comprehensive impact. The 1944 Education Act subsequently provided the Youth Service with its first legislative base in that it placed responsibility with LEAs for making youth work for those over the statutory school leaving age (14 years) and up to the age of 21, part of its further education provision. The Government and LA involvement in youth

work of the war years is the most extensive in the history of the Service, perhaps until recent Ministerial Conferences.

In the late 1950s, by which time conscription had ended, the school leaving age had been raised to 15, there was virtually full employment, and a separate youth culture alongside a rise in youth crime were being perceived, the Youth Service was one in which provision was still, in the main, by voluntary youth organisations, supplemented and supported by LEAs. Participation in voluntary organisations by both young people and by adult volunteers had declined significantly in the period from the end of the war. It is thus not clear whether the decision, taken towards the end of the 1950s, to review the Service rested on philosophy or on pragmatism (Jeffs, 1979).

The Government Committee, set up under Lady Albemarle in 1959, reported hastily (ibid.), in 1960 (HMSO), that the emphasis of the Youth Service should be on 'association, training and challenge'. It recognised the social control potential of youth work and it identified high quality leadership as one of the key elements. Its main proposals, accepted by Government, were for the establishment of a Youth Service Development Council (YSDC) to oversee a ten year plan of investment in buildings and in full-time qualification training courses and for the establishment of a Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) on the terms and conditions of youth workers and community centre wardens. The Youth Service was, as a result of the Albemarle Report (HMSO, 1960), in receipt of more Government money than ever before. Some LEAs used funds to develop school based provision, others to establish the purpose-built, free-standing youth centres which are now synonymous with the 1960s, still others to increase grant aid to voluntary organisations and some LEAs supported a combination of strategies.

The tables had been turned. LEA provision became the dominant partner of statutory and voluntary provision. Young people's participation did not, however, increase in proportion to the increase in funds available and the decline in involvement of those at the older end of the age range continued. As the popularity of youth clubs

amongst young people declined so alternative settings for youth work were proposed. School based provision was the youth club's main competition but detached youth work too was beginning to develop during the 1960s (see, for example, Morse, 1965). Despite the dramatic increase in the number of people qualifying as full-time youth workers, the Service continued to experience recruitment difficulties.

Two reports were commissioned by the YSDC, in the late 1960s, one to look at the relationship between schools and the Youth Service, the other to consider the Service's potential as an agency of community development. The reports were combined in the publication 'Youth and Community Work in the 1970s' (HMSO, 1969), whose emphasis lay with the involvement of young people in democratic processes, as part of community, which promoted the notion of a broader remit for the Service, a Youth and Community Service. The Milson-Fairbairn Report (HMSO,1969) was rejected by Government, by some LEAs and in particular by some of the voluntary organisations. Some LEAs were nevertheless in agreement with its main thrusts, so the incorporation of youth provision into schools continued in some authorities; in others, Youth Services became Youth and Community Services, at least in name; in still others there was no change.

The combination of the post Albemarle injection of cash, combined with the lack of certainty with which the Milson-Fairbairn Report had been received, rendered Albemarle the dominant influence for years to come (Jeffs, 1979; Smith, 1988).

During the 1970s youth unemployment began to rise to a level not experienced in the U.K. since the 1930s. The 1970s were years of political selectivity with special funds being made available to target particular social problems. There were Education Priority Areas to combat the under-achievement of inner city children in primary schools; there were Housing Action Areas in which Local Authorities made available grants to owners and landlords for the inclusion of basic amenities; there were Community Development Projects followed by Urban Aid and Urban Programme Projects, diverse social initiatives in communities experiencing multi-deprivation. The

national Government response to youth unemployment was to initiate a string of employment training schemes for school leavers.

The Thompson Report, published in 1982 (DES), identified the current role of the Youth Service as the personal development of young people, all those young people who felt they had need of it. In this respect, Thompson was out of step with the powerful political thinking of the time. The Report also discussed the needs of particular groups of young people, for example girls and young women, but the responses it suggested maintained an emphasis on enabling the individual to cope rather than changing the structures. The Thompson Report also made comment on the unexploited resources of the Youth Service and this legitimated continued Government reluctance to extend its statutory base. Thompson had reinforced the notions of participation introduced in the Milson-Fairbairn Report and supported growing practice around "the issues" (gender, race, homelessness to name a few) but the absence of Government direction or its policy of atrophy (Davies, 1991) and the availability of funds for special projects enabled Youth Services to further diversify.

Youth work has thus reflected economic and political concerns. There have been struggles and shifts of emphasis in relation to its philosophy and its functions. It has arguably been the victim of fashion.

1988: The Position of Young People

Youth Population

The number of young people proportionate to the general population in the U.K. was in decline (Skinner, 1988; BYC, 1992; Jeffs and Smith, 1993). This was not reflected, however, in the degree of public concern about them.

Education

About a third of 16 to 18 year olds were in full-time education, with about another third continuing in education part-time. The full-time participation rate in the

U.K. was significantly lower than that in other European countries (BYC, 1992). The proportion of young people remaining in full-time education was increasing and more young people were leaving education with some formal qualifications than in the previous decade: there were 12% without qualifications in 1986 as compared with 20% in 1976 (Skinner, 1988). There was concern that Britain's school leavers were poorly equipped by comparison with their European counterparts to compete for jobs in a transformed economy requiring fewer and fewer manual workers.

Employment

There were a decreasing number of teenagers in employment of any sort, except perhaps illegal, part-time and casual employment which certainly existed (BYC, 1992) though its size and trends are difficult to measure. Youth unemployment, though probably not at its height, continued to be a serious issue in the late 1980s but there were large regional differences, there being many more opportunities in employment in the more affluent south east than in the north. In September 1988, official recognition of unemployment amongst 16 to 18 year olds ceased.

Training

Apprenticeships, the traditional form of training for the U.K.'s young people, were scarce. The Youth Training Scheme (YTS) was replaced, in 1988, by Youth Training (YT), a scheme on which the Government guaranteed a place for every 16 and 17 year old who was neither in full-time education nor in employment. Although it may have been the case that in straight numbers there were enough training places in the country for the young people who were eligible, many young people were not offered places either because there were insufficient places in their locality, because the places available were ill-suited to the particular young people, because the young people themselves were available for only a short period of time (between jobs, expecting babies, nearing their 18th birthdays) or because there was a mis-match in the

dates of availability of places and of young people (CAB, 1989; BYC, 1992). There was, additionally, serious cynicism amongst young people, their parents and the people working with young people about the quality of training being offered via YT and its purpose was often considered to be a means of reducing the unemployment statistics. Young people wanted jobs and comparatively few obtained them by travelling the YT route. Furthermore there was initial apprehension, which was soon to.be justified, that this was a further raising of the school leaving age, this time to 18; those young people who teachers had found difficult to motivate and control in the classroom at each raising of the school leaving age (most recently to 16 in the early 1970s) were now to be trained by YT supervisors and employers, themselves not trained as a requirement and variously well-equipped for the task.

Young People's Financial Situation

The rate of pay for young people on YT schemes was £29.50 for 16 year olds and £35.00 for 17 year olds. This was a significant reduction in real terms from the allowances paid to participants in the first teenagers' job creation project, the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), (BYC, 1992). The Wages Act 1986 removed protection of wages for people under the age of 21 and wages of young people in this age group, as a percentage of wages of people aged 21 and over, were falling (ibid.). The introduction of "guaranteed" YT places coincided with loss of entitlement to income support for most 16 and 17 year olds and hardship amongst young people in this age group was not unusual in some regions (CAB, 1989). The Social Security Act 1986 had introduced lower benefits for young people under the age of 25. Young people who were working, who were on Government Youth Training or who were unemployed were financially poorer than in the previous decade.

Young Parents

Motherhood amongst young women under the age of 20 was increasing but decreasing amongst young women aged 20 to 24. More children with mothers under 20 were being born outside marriage (Skinner,1988). Over half of these children were being registered in the names of both their mother and their father (ibid.) but the parents were not always living together. Income support entitlement rules were such that it was sometimes not in their interests to do so.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse of children and young people, often by an older member of the family, was receiving much publicity, for example via the launch of Esther Rantzen's 'Childline'. The importance of the issue is further demonstrated by provision made for these young people in the Children Act 1989 (Frost, 1991). This legislation was unusual, something of a contrast to the financial disempowerment of young people, in that it allowed for the young person's own view to be taken into consideration.

Homelessness

There was concern about homelessness amongst young people, a proportion of whom were rendered homeless through a combination of their financial situation and the non-existence of or estrangement from their parental home (Skinner, 1988; CAB, 1989; BYC, 1992). Media attention converged on homelessness in the capital, but only a third of homeless young people were located there (BYC,1992). The Vagrancy Act 1824 began to be used to prosecute the homeless and its use also disproportionately focussed on London (ibid.).

Causes of Death

The most common causes of death for young adults aged 15 to 34 were accidents, followed by cancers, followed by suicides, the latter accounting for 13%, an

increase of 31% between 1979 and 1989. (Suicides in the general population were increasing.) A large majority of suicides by young adults were by young men while the great majority of parasuicides (unsuccessful attempts) were by young women.(Ibid.)

Substance Use

A majority of teenagers, especially and not surprisingly those at the older end of the grouping, were regular consumers of alcohol and smoking was increasing amongst young people while declining in the population at large (Skinner, 1988; BYC, 1992). Use of illegal drugs (most often cannabis) was by a sizeable minority. The dance drugs, for example ecstasy, were emerging perhaps to replace the publicised use of solvents by young people earlier in the decade; these were drugs of which even fewer adults had any experience which may explain the degree of alarm with which they were regarded.

Alleged Lawlessness

The "youth problem" was capped in the 1980s by a media encouraged perception of lawlessness amongst young people. Riots in the inner cities which began in 1982 continued to be occasional localised occurrences throughout the 1980s and were often attributed in the press to young people (MacDonald et al, 1993). Car and motorcycle crime too was headline news; the restrictive legislation affecting the complexity, the cost and arguably the pleasure of (young) people's access to their own transport was already far advanced with more legislation pertaining to motor-cycle training and licenses in the pipe-line. Reported crime by young people fell by 25% in the decade between 1979 and 1989, though 24% of all offenders committing indictable offences in 1989 were aged between 17 and 21 (BYC, 1992). The bulk of the offences were those of theft, handling stolen goods and burglaries (ibid.), not the public order and offences of violence which were receiving so much publicity.

The Government's Treatment of Public Services

By 1988, reforms in all major public services had recently been implemented. Internal markets had been created in the Health Service. Responsibility for financial decisions were put into the hands of the professionals making clinical decisions, the financial interest of the hospital or the practice thus having much greater capacity than before to influence the medical treatment received by patients. Income of general practices was linked to the number of registered patients encouraging competition and selective acceptance of new patients. (Jeffs, 1990). The monolith of the National Health Service was further divided by the facility for Health Authorities to contract out their Ambulance Services. The Government approach, to the Health Service, under the flags of effectiveness, economy and efficiency, had been to divide it into its composite parts, to create competition between them, to ensure the prominence of the financial implications in medical decisions with the consequences of reduced public expenditure, power located at central Government and at points of delivery rather than with an intermediary administrative corporation and increased choices only for consumers with little need of remedial health care.

Resources had started to be shifted away from Local Authority Social Services Departments towards national voluntary organisations like Save the Children and Barnardo's for the delivery of, for example, intermediate treatment. The thrust of this service had changed away from a preventive group-work facility for young people on supervision orders or who were members of families on social workers' caseloads to an intensive, behaviour modification programme for known offenders. Resources for care of the elderly were in the process of being directed increasingly at the private sector. (Ibid.) The emergence of the sexual abuse issue and the subsequent legislation in the form of the Children Act 1989 perhaps saved Social Services Departments from further decimation but even so, their work was much more directed towards people who fitted particular criteria, remedial responses to crises rather than the more liberal, preventive social work of the previous decade. Some of the themes first discussed in

relation to the Health Service have reappeared in this short discussion of change in Social Services: dividing services into their composite parts; creating competition; encouraging the profit motive to influence care decisions; reduced public expenditure; removal of power from the intermediary administrator, in this case Local Authorities; and a more fragmented service to clients. The Social Services example illustrates well another feature of Government practice, that of targeting particular groups of people, delivering a specialist rather than a generic service.

Closest to home for the Youth Service were the dramatic changes taking place in formal education as a result of the Education Reform Act, which had been debated hard if not long, and which became law in July 1988. The Act determined a centrally directed national curriculum for schools and offered them the facility of "opting out" of LEA control. It introduced regulations to ensure greater parental choice of school and it linked the school budget to the number of pupils attracted. The familiar themes of power relocated at the centre and the extremities, division of parts of a service and competition between them and finance having greater power to influence educational decisions re-emerge here. Choice was to be greater for the parents of trouble-free youngsters and public expenditure reduced.

The dismantling of Local Authorities and other intermediary sources of power, not to say irritation, had begun.

Crisis in the Youth Service

Attendance at youth clubs and groups in both the Local Authority and the voluntary sectors was in decline. Young people themselves were becoming a smaller proportion of the population. There was increased competition for their attention from commercial entertainment outlets. The home entertainment industry of sound and video systems and computer games had moved forward in leaps and bounds. There were fewer, on average, children to the household, resulting in teenagers having their own rooms, sometimes with televisions, video facilities, music systems and home

computers, in which to engage in their personal entertainment preferences and to entertain their friends.

The Education Reform Act 1988 had effectively rewritten Section 41 of the Education Act 1944 which had provided Local Education Authorities with the powers but not the obligation to provide a Youth Service. The 1988 Act added breadth (in legislation) to the notion of further education, articulating the incorporation of vocational, social, physical and recreational education. Some within the Youth Service were comforted by this but others regarded as ominous the omission of specific reference to a Youth Service and of a definition of adequacy in relation to further education provision.

Youth Services, determined and provided by Local Authorities mostly in some sort of partnership with local and national voluntary organisations, had become different from one another in many respects. At the very core, Services differed in their functions, from the generalist providing meeting places and youth activities to those young people who received more specialist functions either in respect of services provided or the client group served. So some Services were more oriented towards advice, information and counselling to individual young people; others were providing programmes of activities and personal development opportunities for groups identified because of their circumstances, like the oppressed groups, or because of their behaviour, like young offenders. Thus the content and the client group were linked and of serious concern within the Service was the age range of the client group. Legislation, such as it was, steered the Service towards its traditional client group of those over the statutory school leaving age. Many Services were formally or informally focussing, not just on those in the secondary school age band but even on those at junior school. The voluntary organisations, those most likely to rely on the delivery of services by volunteers, were vocal in their support for work with a younger age group. Some Youth Services were hinged around purpose-built youth centres which reflect the post-Albemarle era. Others were essentially school-based, following one of the

threads of 'Youth and Community Work in the 70s' (HMSO, 1969). A good many Services were delivering their goods to young people via detached and outreach youth workers. Typically, a Youth Service was not pure in any of these respects. It was likely to be delivering a range of different services, to a range of young people in a wide age band via a mixture of styles of youth work.

The philosophical frameworks in which different Youth Services found themselves depended to some extent on the location of the Service within the Local Authority. Although all Local Authority Youth Services originate from Education Departments, a small but significant proportion were relocated during the 1980s in other administrations, most popularly Leisure but including Social Services, the Chief Executive's and others. Youth Services found their strongest relationship to be usually with formal education but alternatively to be with recreation or with juvenile justice (Smith, 1989). The structure of individual Services was being reviewed, largely to accommodate public spending cuts, and they varied a great deal: a Service might have a ratio of one manager to 15 workers or a ratio of one to three; there was no agreement between Services about job titles, about job contents nor, despite the existence of the JNC, was there parity of pay and conditions (Sawbridge and Spence, 1991). Services varied a great deal in size: the 1944 Act said only that Local Authorities could provide a Youth Service, not how much of a Service it should be; in communities of deprivation, its size fluctuated rapidly depending on the availability of funds for alleviating one social ill or another.

In 1988, young people were declining in number but were as much in the public eye as ever. The national Youth Service was so disunified and fragmented that it was difficult to regard it one Service. It was effectively without legislative protection. The Government's approach to other public services had been ruthless. From within the Youth Service it was possible to detect the delicate aroma of rising panic.

Norfolk

Norfolk was experiencing an increase in its population. This was the explanation and justification for the expansion of the Youth Service. Improved communications were changing the County from its almost exclusively rural past with two main coastal holiday resorts and a beautiful University city into more of a commercial centre in Norwich itself with an increasing number of dormitory villages and market towns in the County for commuters to Norwich and for commuters via Norwich to London. The character and the economy of the County were being transformed. This transformation is clearly shown in comparative regional trends. As the research began in 1989, 1989's Central Statistical Office's (CSO) data (HMSO, 1989a) is used throughout.

East Anglia's overall population increased by 6.3% from 1981 to 1987. Norfolk's part in this was 4.9%. Whilst other shire counties expanded more, this figure shows an appreciable increase over a short duration of time and the increase was accelerating at the time of the study. The region's population was projected to increase by a further 12%, the largest increase of all regions, although East Anglia continued to be the most sparsely populated region in England.

The birth rate in the region was the second lowest in the U.K.. A relatively low proportion of the population of Norfolk itself, some 17%, was aged fourteen or under, against the more common percentage of 18% in the rest of the region and in most of the U.K.. Taken together, these observations indicate a relative isolation of the children of in-comers in the 1990s. The population of the region was slightly more elderly than average for the U.K..

The region was characterised further by having the lowest number of children born outside marriage and the smallest proportion of lone parent households in England and Wales. Participation in nursery education was poor. The staying on rate in post 16 education was rising and in Norfolk had risen faster than in the other East Anglian counties.

East Anglia had, in 1987, the lowest rate of notifiable criminal offences, rising more slowly than in other parts of the country and amongst the highest rate of crime detection.

Norfolk's 1988 unemployed totalled 20,000, 6.4% of the population, the highest rate in East Anglia, with 40% of these long term unemployed. The region had the lowest annual average rate of unemployment in 1988 at 4.8%. Of those employed, a high proportion were self-employed. More people were employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing than almost anywhere else in the U.K..

Female average earnings were £144 per week, a little more than half of the average male weekly earnings of £221. These figures were the lowest in East Anglia, but the region as a whole was on a par with other regions in the country, excepting the South East.

Car ownership in East Anglia was high. Its rural nature clearly made this a priority, but the region also spent more than any other on leisure goods and services, while spending a lower than average amount on alcohol and tobacco.

The picture of Norfolk, then, is one of an area with fewer problems than many areas of the country. Norfolk was not a county of particular wealth but its economic activity was as sound as any outside the South East and had been little affected by the rising unemployment affecting much of the country at the time. Crime was relatively low. The county was trailing other parts of the country with respect to educational performance indicators, like participation in pre and post-compulsory education. This was, perhaps less important to families who could obtain employment without it and who were not stretched by social problems.

Norfolk Youth and Community Service

In 1961, the year following the publication of the Albemarle Report, it was the

policy of the Norfolk Education Committee to provide:

> *A network of County Youth Centres, with their own premises...*
> *These would act as focal points for the youth work in their districts.*
> *Districts were to be equivalent in extent to the catchment areas of*
> *secondary modern schools.... Concurrently, professional Youth*
> *Leader/Organisers, were to be appointed.*
>   (Norfolk Education Committee, 1970:3)

The NYCS of 1988 was a clear development of the 1960s intent. The name

had changed to incorporate "community" but the focus on young people had been

retained. The districts had become divisions. There were 33 of them, each with a

County Youth Centre, the premises varying from a listed building at Attleborough, a

converted cinema at Aylsham to purpose-built, Albemarle style facilities at Diss. Each

division had a full-time Divisional Youth and Community Officer (DYCO), some part-

time paid youth workers and some voluntary youth work. Each divisional office was

comparatively well-resourced with clerical support and modern office equipment.

The management team was comprised of a Principal Officer (PYCO), one

Deputy (DPYCO), and two Assistants (APYCO) all located at County Hall. The

Assistants had County wide responsibilities for part-time youth work training and

curriculum development respectively. There were additionally five Area Officers

(AYCO) each managing a team of between five and nine DYCOs in geographical

groupings.

The Service was firmly located in the County Education Department. It was,

unusually for the late 1980s, an expanding Service, valued by both appointed and

elected sides of the County Council. This may, in part at least, be attributed to the

traditional, clearly understood functions, which were the mainstay of the Service. The

County Centres were highly visible foci for youth work and they provided youth clubs,

meeting places and activities for young people, with varying degrees of participation.

Furthermore they provided support in the form of use of premises, professional advice and access to office resources for the plethora of voluntary youth and community groups in the County. These services were complemented by a dazzling array of Area and County sporting, crafting and challenging, high profile events in which young people from youth clubs in the County participated at frequent and regular intervals. Furthermore, the Service maintained its profile by its involvement in important County life events, like the Royal Norfolk Show, and used to good effect a range of NYCS goods - greetings cards, umbrellas, clip-boards, key fobs, pens, sweat-shirts, t-shirts and so on. The organisation was, unusually for Youth Services, one with a corporate image.

The Norfolk Youth and Community Service was a tightly run ship. Communication in the Service was channelled through a series of timetabled management and team meetings facilitating the flow of information from top to bottom and vice versa at ordered, monthly intervals. There was an annual staff conference at which decisions concerned with the year's priorities were made and representatives to working or planning groups to achieve the targets set were selected strictly on the basis of one from each Area team.

In 1988, the NYCS Policy was being drafted for publication in January 1989. It observes the Thompson Report's summary of needs to which the Youth Service should respond: 'association, advice and counselling, activities, action in the community and access to life and vocational skills'. It defines the 'key elements' through which the curriculum in response to young people's needs is devised as: structure of the Service, environment for youth work, content of youth work and the process of social education. It outlines the time-scales through which youth work opportunities are offered: regular and frequent; periodic; unusual and sustained. It details specifically residential experiences, activities of interest, travel, local participation, exploration of issues and involvement.

In the document's 'Methods' section it offers the following description of the process of social education:

> *make, keep and end relationships*
> *join, change lead and leave go*
> *test out independence - try out roles*
> *to know rejection and acceptance*
> *practise communication and social skills*
> *manage feelings and conflict*
> *sample activities, develop interests*
> *work co-operatively in groups, plan projects, see them through,*
> *make decisions, take responsibility, influence others and be*
> *involved in the community.*
> (Norfolk CC Education Department, 1988b:8)

It goes on to use the National Advisory Council for the Youth Service (NACYS) description of characteristics of Youth Services:

> *securing provision for youth leisure and recreational needs;*
> *working on contemporary issues;*
> *personal development through social education;*
> *different contexts for... experience in general education;*
> *countervailing disadvantage;*
> *tasks concerned with the transition to adulthood.*
> (Norfolk CC Education Department, 1989b:9)

These were genuine attempts by practitioners to pin down, in the absence of a generally accepted theory of youth work, the what and the how of their trade.

Although the policy document does not specify a target group, it was generally accepted in NYCS that the age range of the Service was 14 to 19 years and only isolated initiatives sought to reach identified groups of young people, rather the services were on offer to those young people who came to the County Centres or who were members of voluntary youth clubs and other organisations.

Norfolk is geographically isolated but there were strong links between NYCS and regional, national and inter-national bodies. The Principal and Deputy Principal Officers were active members of professional regional and national organisations and the Deputy Principal had retained her long-standing relationship with a national voluntary organisation. NYCS had participated in research for two recent national

publications on the functions of full-time and area officer posts in the Youth Service (see Linnell, 1988 and Rogers, 1988). Furthermore, the County Education Officer (CEO) was Chair of NACYS and was a member of sub-groups of the Council which were in the process of producing publications on Youth Service direction, resourcing, working with girls and young women and working with young people with disabilities respectively (see NACYS, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c and 1989d). Additionally, the expanding nature of the Service and the absence of any full-time youth work training courses in Norfolk or surrounding counties provided an incoming workforce bringing ideas and experience from other Youth Services.

Negotiating the Research Contract

It was against this backdrop of transformation in the County, an increasing youth population, slightly increasing resources, local security but advancing national insecurity for the Youth Service that NYCS sought to review the needs and wants of young people and the services it ought to be offering.

The first step in the contract coming to Cranfield was taken when NYCS consulted the County's own Business Consultancy Agency which offered to undertake a piece of work with the Service to find out what the Service wanted to know. This offer was declined. A number of other exploratory approaches were made around the same time, to the University of East Anglia, to Norwich City College and to the full-time workers of NYCS with a view to secondment. Before agreeing the contract, Cranfield was to be made aware of the former but neither of the other approaches and the latter of these caused some resentment, on the part of full-time workers, towards the research project. The Business Consultancy Manager had himself completed a Master's Degree at the Cranfield School of Management, knew of the then Department of Social Policy (DSP), which had successfully undertaken contract research before, and so wrote, explaining that funds were available for a two year project and enquiring

whether the Department knew of anyone able to undertake a review of the Youth and Community Service.

The letter arrived in the Department on the day of my registration, 26th September 1988. I was one of four youth workers in that year's student intake, the only one without financial support for my studies. I had been drawn to studying at the Institute because of two aspects of its reputation: its experience in youth work and community education and its ability to find funds to support studentships. My initial research proposal was about the support of good youth work practice in a community education framework. The letter from Norfolk was shown to me. It was quite different from the ideas I had already, it was 300 miles from home but I was interested to find out more.

A meeting was arranged between representatives of the Norfolk Business Consultancy and DSP and I was invited to attend. Norfolk's Business Consultancy Manager was able to provide some outline information on the structure and budget of the Service. He had ascertained that the Service wanted to know something about the needs of young people, that it encompassed feelings about it being time to make changes but uncertainty about the nature or the direction of these. The information I took away with me from the meeting was firstly an image of relatively untroubled and untroublesome youth in Norfolk, secondly of funds being available for a two year post in the Youth and Community Service and thirdly an unanswered question about why there was to be a review. My impressions were characterised by lack of clarity.

I made use of the twenty or thirty minutes, immediately following the meeting and before I was obliged to begin my homeward journey, to record some ideas about ways in which the review might be directed. I employed my practitioner's framework for understanding the nature of the organisation. In my ignorance of Norfolk, its youth workers and its young people, I imposed my familiarity with my home, with my youth worker colleagues and with "my" young people. I had learned, from these, my beliefs about the ways in which change in youth work practice occurs and these are strongly

reflected in the "back-of-an-envelope" flow diagram which resulted. It illustrated the process of an action research project, to identify the youth work needs of young people and to influence the Service in responding to them. These ideas were thankfully given greater formality in a prose version by Dr Colin Fletcher which was sent, along with my flow diagram, to Norfolk, two or three days later. (See Appendix A.)

Further meetings took place in November, one at Cranfield and one in Norfolk, involving first the Deputy Principal Youth and Community Officer, then the County Education Officer and Principal Youth and Community Officer. These meetings developed the working relationship between the two agencies, negotiated the terms of the contract and agreed that I should be the researcher.

En route to the meeting with the County Education Officer in Norfolk, it occurred to me that this project might really happen. If and when a number of people had worked hard to create the opportunity, I should be obliged to take it up. My feet were not so much cold as frozen and I resorted to an age old strategy for the avoidance of opportunity. I set my price high. My heart sank when the CEO signalled his acceptance of the price, 'though this was to have further implications for the project.

Earlier in 1988, the JNC had re-structured youth worker pay scales, producing a matrix by which to assess the grading of each post with determined lines of assimilation from the old to the new. It had constituted a very significant (12.5% on average) pay rise for that year. It had also resulted in many disputes relating to grading of posts between workforces and employers. Norfolk was no exception and was at the time in dispute with its workforce, represented by NALGO. To pay me at the grade I wanted might have created a precedent, so the CEO suggested simply contracting DSP to carry out the project, rather than Norfolk County Council employing the researcher direct on a temporary contract.

The plan for the afternoon was to have been a business meeting with the CEO followed by an interview by the PYCO and DPYCO of me, the Cranfield recommended candidate. The job, as such, had disappeared during the course of the

business meeting but the Norfolk contingent was somehow locked into the original plan. The big freeze was continuing to sap my enthusiasm for this so I was perplexed at the prospect of being interviewed for a job which did not exist. I agreed, however, to a further discussion in which the Norfolk personnel could find out a little more about me. So the PYCO flung interview-like questions at me: 'You haven't much rural experience. How do you think you will cope with Norfolk?' and I threw back answers with the confidence of one who does not want the job: 'A good youth worker can work anywhere!' The DPYCO eventually became bored with this and said 'Could everyone who feels the need to say yes, get their yeses said, so that we can proceed?' The PYCO and I obediently said yes I was acceptable and yes I'll take the job and that was that. I had committed myself to giving up my permanent job - it had its problems but it was, in my view, the best youth work job in my Borough, to selling my house, to leaving my partner and my friends, to uprooting my menagerie and to moving 300 miles to Norfolk.

The details of cost were sent to Norfolk on 23rd November 1988. When, on 14th December, the last meeting of the student group before Christmas, no reply had been received, it seemed that the proposals had failed and despite my earlier reluctance I was immensely disappointed. It had been an exciting prospect but I resigned myself to staying put for the time being at least. Imagine my surprise when I received a telephone call from Cranfield on 22nd December to say that Norfolk had faxed qualified acceptance of the terms. It was back on! Later that day, I attended my own Youth and Community Service Christmas gathering and I told my Principal Youth Officer that I would be leaving. He responded with apparent disappointment, saying he had just found out that our Borough had been successful in its application for funds to run one of the new apprenticeship schemes and he had been hoping I would head it up. He had me aching with frustration for at least two minutes!

There were further contractual problems, this time associated with the policies and practices of Cranfield Institute, which the arrangements made apparently

contravened. As one of the consequences of this, my proposed status changed again to that of self-employed researcher, sub-contracted by Cranfield to carry out the Norfolk research. Correspondence relating mainly to costings and revised costings continued to flow between Norfolk and Cranfield right up until the start of the research project on 1st March 1989.

The Nature of the Research Contract

The agreement between Norfolk County Council and Cranfield, and in turn, between Cranfield and myself, was for a two year research project, March 1989 to February 1991. Norfolk was to pay Cranfield to provide a sub-contracted student researcher to undertake the work, to provide academic supervision, for the researcher's student fees and for the Institute's costs. NYCS was to provide directly clerical support, office accommodation and the researcher's travel/subsistence expenses. I was to be the researcher. A steering group of representatives of both agencies was to meet periodically to guide and to assist the project.

My status in both organisations was full of ambiguities. At Cranfield, I was no longer simply a student. The responsibilities I assumed increased suddenly to encompass the risks taken by staff in the Department in backing this horse. My relationship with academic staff moved closer to that of colleagues working together. I could no longer evaluate my success or failure in my student research project in terms of my own investment because the investment of the Institute, as was, in my work was now much more significant than in that of my student colleagues. Yet a student I was! Recognising the professional youth work knowledge and skills I brought to my research, I was very much a learner, knowing not even enough to know how little I knew about research.

In Norfolk, I was in many ways treated as a member of staff. I was included in the culture of the organisation: welcome cards and dinner invitations were waiting for me on my desk when I arrived; an induction was planned for me; I was,

inappropriately really, given the title NYCS Research Officer. I had the freedom of the Service in the same way as members of staff. In other respects, I was too privileged to be a member of staff: I received no managerial supervision, so my comings and goings were very much my own business; my attendance at staff meetings was optional; the project and my presence placed demands on the Service which were new and for which new systems had to be devised or old rules broken, giving the impression of privilege even if this were not a reality. Furthermore, there was a level of interest in my work, resulting frustratingly in requests to explain the purpose and process of my work, the nature of the contract, my part in it and my right to my part; this set me apart.

There was one major change to the contract, before its end. NYCS experienced difficulty in providing the project with suitable office accommodation. The first 16 months of the Project were spent in almost wholly unsuitable accommodation. When the Project eventually moved into its own office in July 1990, the Project was extended by two months, to April 1991, to compensate for delays in which office problems had resulted.

There were other problems, not anticipated and not resolved. For example, it was difficult to appoint a suitably qualified clerical worker. Furthermore, it turned out that the main function of the steering group was to raise my blood pressure. An early debate rendered it a sounding board but the Norfolk participants were never sufficiently confident of their ground to participate effectively.

The Nature of the Research Proposal

On reflection, the research proposal received rather less attention than the business arrangements. The intention was to help Norfolk to develop into a more vibrant and responsive Service. (I had little knowledge of its existing character but it seemed to me that if a Service had enough vibrancy and responsiveness there would not be much it could not do and, at the same time, they seemed to be qualities that

Youth Services could always do with more of.) So the proposal was about creating change via the processes of community education with which I was familiar as a practitioner.

Credibility was a crucial factor, hence the need to create confidence amongst practitioners in the intentions and processes of the research project. The process anticipated was a circular one. It would begin by respecting the knowledge of those involved and creating a data bank, credible with those involved because it would be the sum of their knowledge. It would reveal recognisable gaps in knowledge and in skill which corporate exploration, probably into participatory youth work and evaluation in youth work, by a motivated workforce would seek to fill. The sharing of experiments undertaken, problems resolved and problems outstanding would create support networks, potentially inter-agency networks headed up by the Youth Service improving its public profile and image, for further learning and greater responsiveness.

CHAPTER TWO

YOUTH WORK LITERATURE

There is no generally accepted theory of youth work (Jeffs and Smith, 1987). Despite the long history of practice, there is a paucity of academic literature and less serious research. It has been argued that youth work suffers from an internal anti-intellectualism (Smith, 1988), perhaps because of youth workers' preference for spontaneity or possibly because of some kind of solidarity with young people themselves. This may have hindered the development of a firm theoretical base for the task, but this seems too simple an explanation for so glaring an omission. Much of the literature which exists fails to build solidly on that which has already been laid down. Rather, there is a tendency for writers to start from scratch offering explanations of aspects of youth work, without adequate reference to the rest. This, too, is a feature which reflects practice, each project being created afresh by its young and adult participants. The effect is that of jig-saw pieces, some showing greater clarity than others, few appropriately connected to their neighbours.

The temptation then is to draw on theory which is located in particular academic disciplines or on the theories of allied trades like social work, formal education and informal adult education. While these inform aspects of youth work, and are employed as the foundation for aspects of my research, they are not about youth work and so are, in the main, excluded from this review of youth work literature. My thesis is about youth work. It is about young people insofar as they are the client group. It is about the Youth Service, insofar as it is the range of agencies which undertake youth work. The literature selected here reflects this emphasis.

In the context of the Norfolk research, it was necessary to find out how far the existing literature would go, in helping to establish a framework for the enquiry. Practitioners in Norfolk and elsewhere were trying to define the purpose and the

methods or processes of their work, but these attempts lacked academic rigour. Classifications were imperfect, for example, confusing values with intentions.

The piecemeal nature of the youth work library makes it difficult to classify texts by concept. Writers have addressed various combinations of youth culture, youth work purpose, content, process or method, evaluation, and structure of the Service. Direct comparisons are rarely appropriate. The texts are thus organised chronologically around the three major Government Reports on the Youth Service: Albemarle, 1960; Milson-Fairbairn, 1969; Thompson, 1982. The period between the Thompson Report and the start of my research in 1988 forms the fourth group and the period of the research project itself, 1988 - 1993, forms a fifth. This approach serves to illustrate the range of thinking and literature which was available at the outset of the Norfolk research, as well as that which emerged during the project and as the thesis has taken shape.

The Albemarle Report

Astley (1988) locates the Albemarle Report firmly in the understanding of young people, the more far reaching youth policies and the political ideology of the post-war era which preceded it. It was the response to three phenomena. There was an increase, albeit temporary, in the youth population. Young people were not behaving as their parents before them had; a separate youth culture was perceived. The high hopes, for statutory and voluntary organisation partnership, had been dashed; optimism about state investment in 1944 was progressively lost; young people's involvement was reducing.

Between 1947 and 1949, a sample survey of Birmingham's young people and of youth organisations was carried out by Bryan Reed, a founder member of the Methodist youth movement (Reed, 1950). Amongst its outcomes were that just over half the young men and a third of the young women were members of youth organisations. They tended to be aged 15 to 17; only a fifth of the 19 year olds were

members. It suggests that the youth organisations were attending to the physical needs of young people and little else (Parr, 1992). Reed argues that the central thrust of youth work be education for democracy and he proposed better training (ibid.).

Prior to Albemarle, then, there was youth work. There had been a Youth Service sanctioned, if scarcely provided for, by the state since the 1939 - 45 war. The Service had already moved on, at least in some organisations, from the liberal concerns of the middle and upper classes for the poor, deserving working classes, from social control, and from physical fitness to citizenship.

Albemarle proposes three main functions for the Youth Service: association, training and challenge for young people aged 15 to 20. The report was written against the back-drop of post-war enthusiasm for political consensus (Astley,1988). It endorsed post-war concerns for association, training for the social responsibilities of adulthood and character-building. The Albemarle Committee has been strongly criticised for failing to undertake proper research (Jeffs, 1979) and for failing to recognise the transformation of life in society and its impact on young people (Astley, 1988). It has been suggested that the Committee was influenced by a popular image of youth as young men and did not understand the lives of young people well enough (ibid.). Nevertheless, the Albemarle Report is significant partly because it sanctions the change from philanthropy, benevolence and influence to a more young person-centred approach (Davies, 1992) which is, arguably, still at the heart of provision.

Towards Milson-Fairbairn

In 'Working with Youth Groups' (Matthews, 1966) the portrayal of young people continues to be male-dominated. Certainly girls are mentioned and it seems, from examples of practice given, that it is understood that there are differences between the interests and futures of boys and girls because each group is offered a gender stereotypical programme, sewing for girls and motor-cycle maintenance for boys. Unfortunately it seems that the differences were understood no more

comprehensively here than they had been ten years previously since this tradition remains unchallenged. Matthews' book is a training manual which was used on some full-time initial training courses in the 1960s, when she was Principal Lecturer at the National College, and which continued to be used for a long time to come. The purpose of youth work, its concern to help young people to fully develop their potential, is mentioned only in passing. It is principally a book of method, specifically the application of social group work method to youth work. The vehicles for the method are mostly traditional youth clubs and centres in which activities, relationships with the youth leader and relationships between young people can be used, according to the judgement of the social group worker, to enable young people to develop. This might be through adding depth or breadth to their experience and by learning through endeavour to manage their own activities. Matthews is careful not to say that social group work is youth work, rather, she says, that it is a tool, a social work process, which is applicable to youth work.

Stark contrasts to this pedantic prose are provided by Goetschius and Tash (1967) and by Davies and Gibson (1967). Each pair of authors communicate their understanding of young people as more diverse. Davies and Gibson recognise differences related to social class and to gender. Goetschius and Tash recognise differences related to age within the range, from very young teenagers to those who are just under twenty, and to circumstance, contrasting the situations of those at the younger end of the scale with older teenagers, some of whom are married. Davies and Gibson particularly write with affection for young people. Goetschius and Tash acknowledge that some young people want what youth work has to offer, but not on the terms of traditional building-based provision.

The texts, despite the apparent difference of their subject matters, detached youth work and the social education of young people respectively, are similar in their accounts of the intentions of youth work. Social education is the main thrust. The authors' elaborations on this theme are complementary. The Goetschius and Tash

understanding is that social education is not new subject matter, rather it is a way of educating. It involves an enabling relationship; it is person-centred; it is informal; it relies on the life experience of the young people; it is appropriate to individuals, to groups and to communities. Davies and Gibson describe it as co-operation, membership and contribution to common effort. They regard youth workers as practitioners in human relationships, de-valuing the model-centred, in favour of a client-centred approach.

The 1960s decade was crowned by the publication of the Milson-Fairbairn Report, 'Youth and Community Work in the 70s' (HMSO, 1969), really the unhappy marriage of the work of two committees, one chaired by Milson, which looked at the relationship of Youth Service with the adult community, the other chaired by Fairbairn, which looked at the relationship of Youth Service and schools. The report observes a wide range of societal and cultural influences on young people in general, singling out what was perceived as a rise in the number of young people "at risk". It proposes that the differences between groups of young people, related to age, to gender and to 'handicap', be taken account of in pursuit of social education (HMSO, 1969:154), which it describes, interestingly, as 'the goal' of youth work (HMSO,1969:152), rather than of the Youth and Community Service it endorses. Its elaboration of the term, social education, incorporates young people making a position for themselves and engaging in 'critical involvement' (HMSO, 1969:152). Its explanation of the use of the term, youth work, is concerned with its being more far reaching than Youth and Community Service (as though, in the thinking of the YSDC, the Service were confined to formal agencies in either statutory or voluntary sectors) applying to everyone working with young people everywhere. On one hand the report proposes that lower and upper age limits be scotched, on the grounds that young people will join and leave at times which are right for them. On the other hand it articulates the view that one curriculum is appropriate to those of statutory school age and another to those who are beyond it. Since school leaving age is almost arbitrary in

relation to the personal development of the individual, this renders the everyone,

everywhere any time curriculum inconsistent.

Towards Thompson

The youth culture literature of the 1970s, for example Robbins and Cohen

(1978) and Corrigan (1979) was largely male oriented (Griffin, 1986; 1993) and

concerned with the transition from school to work with some analysis of leisure. By

contrast, the various contributors to 'Is Youth a Problem' (Fletcher et al, 1978) present

a different, more diverse view of young people. They found that the girls especially felt

themselves to be badly thought of by adults. They observe the tendency of adults to

treat young people either as old children or as young adults and offer the reminder

that young people are 'fully grown members of their own age group' (Fletcher et al,

1978:24). They notice that adults categorise young people into particular types. They

perceive that children are 'devastatingly frank' (Fletcher et al, 1978:24) but that young

people are more cautious, that there is animosity between age groups in the range and

that there is tension when young people are interviewed in front of their parents.

Fletcher's commentary recognises the differences in the ways that young people are

treated by different adults and the very few adults in the community who advocate on

behalf of young people. Despite this rough justice, it is recorded that young people

demonstrate little resentment. This report is interesting because most of its parts were

written, not by professional researchers and writers, but by a variety of young and

adult participants in a community school who set about answering different aspects of

the "youth problem" question, using qualitative methods, with a view to writing

something for people like themselves.

The period between the Milson-Fairbairn (HMSO, 1969) and the Thompson

(DES, 1982) Reports saw the publication of four texts, important for different reasons.

'The Principles and Practice of Youth and Community Work' (Leighton, 1972) is

clearly, from its title a post Milson-Fairbairn work, but this is almost the only respect

in which it is a 1970s publication. It reads more like a 1970s edition of a 1950s

publication. So, it was unfortunate that it was the training manual introduced to many

who trained for full-time youth work in the 1970s. It proposes that the intention of

youth work is 'individual growth' and 'discovery of personal motivation' (Leighton,

1972:77-80), assumption of responsibility and having fun, which, it argues, is not less

important than education. It endorses the Milson-Fairbairn observation on the

difficulty of relationships between young people and their parents and highlights

working with groups, individuals and relationships as the vehicles for youth work. It

outlines, with a strong normative flavour, some of the features of youth work:

recognition of youth culture; acceptance of young people; confidentiality; "starting

where the young people are"; the youth worker's dilemma over sharing self; and self-

management by youth workers. This book had little to say which was of relevance to

the diverse youth work projects which were emerging in the 1970s.

The earliest of the serious attempts at analysis of purpose created a matrix, the

'social education repertoire (SER) and its historical adjuncts' (Butters and Newell,

1978). In this, Butters and Newell explore the separate youth work ideologies of the

'character building' approach, the three approaches of the SER - 'cultural pluralism',

'community development' and 'institutional reform' - and a new radical paradigm of

'self-emancipation' (1978:38-51). It remains the only analysis which explains how so

many different practices can be the composite parts of different understandings of

social education. The outcome is not, however, entirely satisfactory since it finds no

place for the social and recreational youth work with which so much of the field is

concerned (Smith, 1988). This omission structurally weakens the SER matrix. It is

further criticised for its failure to recognise that the Youth Service is a small

organisation from which it is improbable that structural change will spring (Gutfreund,

1993).

Jeffs' history and development of the Youth Service (1979) is highly critical of

youth work understanding of young people and of youth work itself. He argues that

youth work, as is, is principally concerned with leisure, a reliable form of social control but that the Youth Service identifies with delivery of social education for reasons of status. Social education has been interpreted so broadly within the Service that it has no meaning. His view is that the concept of youth is artificial, that there are neither 'problems' nor 'solutions' which are specific to the age group (Jeffs, 1979:106). Jeffs furthermore starts, with this publication, a long and bitter cry for serious academic research to develop hand in hand with youth work practice.

Perhaps the most important, in the context of this research project, of the publications of this short era is 'Creators not Consumers' (Smith, 1982), first published in 1980. It is important because it addresses most comprehensively to date the questions with which my research is concerned. Smith's view of young people is inseparable from his view of people and of the expectations they may reasonably have of life, but he recognises that the power young people have, is a negative one, that is, to walk away, not to take part, to disrupt. Thus he sees young people as a group with something in common by virtue of their age while seeing them as similar, in other respects, to other members of society. He understands, for example, that people learn best when they are involved in the experience, that learning is significant when people find it for themselves and that it is most effectively pursued when people set their own objectives.

Smith says that the intention of youth work is social education, which is 'the conscious attempt to help people gain for themselves, the knowledge, feelings and skills necessary to meet their own and others developmental needs' (Smith, 1982: 24). Social education has both 'process' and 'product' and each have their own outcomes. 'Process results' are 'knowledge', 'feelings' and 'skills' and it is these with which youth work is particularly concerned (Smith, 1982:7-9). The media of Smith's youth work are firstly existing opportunities, perhaps critical points in the lives of young people, when they are experiencing 'public issues' as 'personal troubles' (Smith, 1982:21-22). Secondly, in combination with existing opportunities, they are groups of young people

because to resolve individual problems is to perpetuate the existing social structure in which (young) people are relatively powerless and it is not to create the change which is the intention of education.

The youth work process involves separating complex tasks into their composite parts, using existing opportunities linking 'personal troubles' and 'public issues' and experiential learning. More profound than the notion of 'learning by doing' (Smith, 1982:15) is the concept of participation which Smith notes was much talked about at the time of publication but which has been far more talked about since. He places participation on a spectrum and locates it between 'selling' and 'spectating' (Smith, 1982:17).

2.1   Youth work styles

Selling   Participating

Telling   Spectating

From 'Creators not Consumers', M. Smith, 1982:18
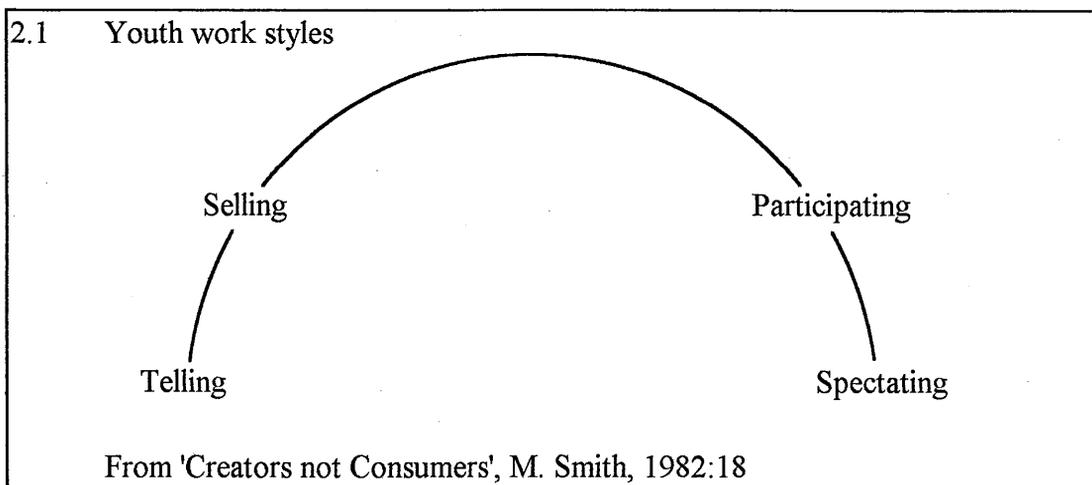
He argues that participation reflects values, is an effective way of people learning and makes good use of limited resources. He gives the concept two groups of key features. The first is about the values which are reflected in the notion. These are identified as: the problem being defined by its owner; an optimistic view of human nature; honesty and explicitness; consistency; flexibility; common sense; freedom of choice; equality; confidentiality. The second group is concerned with the decisions which are an integral feature of participation. They should be real decisions with real consequences, made, in small groups, by those who are affected by them and accountable for them. They should be made by those with the necessary knowledge,

feelings and skills, facilitated in a youth work style which creates access to resources and gives time to learn.

The Thompson Report (DES,1982) concluded the 1970s with a view of young people which is a little surprising. The research carried out for the Review Group, of which little in terms of methods is given, highlights three major concerns of young people: the possibility or experience of unemployment, racism and homelessness. These were certainly items which were high on the agenda in the youth work debate, but, with the exception of unemployment, few young people had experience of them and, in all likelihood, even fewer had made the connection between their own feelings and circumstances and these 'public issues', so the young people in the sample cannot have been representative of their age group. These were, in my view, the concerns of a particularly troubled group of young people or of groups of young people who had benefited from social education. The report identified as lesser concerns: age thresholds, the police, leisure provision, transport, gender roles, sexual relationships and extremist political organisations.

The report tightened the net of young people with whom the Youth Service should work, articulating a broad age range of seven to 25, incorporating two priority age ranges, one of 11 to 14 and one of 15 to 19. Furthermore, the report reverted from the Milson-Fairbairn position to one curriculum: 'experience and participation', the title of the report, for all within the age range. It recognised the spectrum of experiences that young people might and should gain from the Youth Service, pleasure at one end and problem-solving at the other. The composite elements of the Service were, from the perspective of the Thompson Review Group, its experiential curriculum, participation in decision-making, voluntaryism and the non-directive relationship between youth worker and young people. These items are its elaboration of personal development through social education, which it suggests is the main function of youth work.

1982 to 1988

This was the period which immediately preceded the start of my research. The literature detailed here, in combination with that reviewed in earlier sections, was what I had to draw on in building a rationale for my work.

Reactions to Thompson

There were two broad types of reaction, in the youth work literature, to the Thompson Report. The first type was the direct response. These were highly critical of the report's continued emphasis, for the Youth Service, on personal development at the expense of social change and on the individual fitting into existing social structures (Smith and Cartlidge, 1983). There was a cautious welcome to the report's observation of differences between groups of young people (ibid; Leigh, 1983) but further criticism of the report's tendency to interpret the work of the Service in terms of enabling individuals to deal with the effects and of its failure to make a clear statement on whether the Service should continue its scatter-gun approach or direct its fire more precisely (Cartlidge and Smith, 1983). It was viewed by Leigh as little more than a 'toe-hold' (1983:18) in the climb towards clarity of purpose.

The second type of response was more common and reflects the willingness of youth work people to pick up and continue running with the notion of participation. It is an idea taken on board in scouting, in the context of young people making more decisions about the running of their own activities within the organisation (Hayday, 1987). This is a level at which it appeals in many traditional youth clubs, although successive HMI reports (for example, DES, 1987a; 1988; 1991) have found only patchy evidence of it. Brewer (1986) described the use of an existing opportunity for enhancing the level of participation in youth provision. Gordon argues that participation is 'an important and useful part of a youth worker's repertoire, but not the all-embracing essential element for successful youth work that some have claimed for it' (1986:12).

Further along the action trail came Doswell (1987) who argued that participation is about social action, about young people working well beyond the perimeters of youth work itself, to improve lives and the environment of the community, ultimately society. In contrast to this approach, which embraces a more radical form of activity within a Government sponsored concept, Killick (1986) was not alone, amongst practitioners at least, in interpreting the use of participation as a reduction to social control. His view is that those young people who are most likely to commit themselves to the idea are those who are most likely to reflect adult notions of what young people are concerned about and what constitutes appropriate types and levels of activity and action. Participation, then, was aired by these authors and by others (for example, Frank, 1986; Evenden, 1986; Smith, 1986; Crewe, 1986; Sampson, 1986; Reed and Macgeorge, 1987; McKendry, 1988). It was an idea which held appeal for people working with young people, but there was little consensus around its purpose or its key elements.

Images of Young People

In the years which followed the Thompson Report, there continued to be a number of Corrigan (1979) style studies of youth culture and sub-culture. Jenkins' study of young people (young men) on a Belfast housing estate produced two complementary texts, 'Hightown Rules' (1982) which attempted to demonstrate, often through the recorded words of the young people, the relative normality of their lives amid "the troubles" and 'Lads, Citizens and Ordinary Kids' (1983) whose title reflects the young people's own classification and associated life chances. Brake (1985) is highly critical of this style of work, which he regards as providing unreal solutions, explanations of sub-culture, for problems which he attributes to social class.

The youth labour market was of particular interest during this period when it was possible for research and argument to reflect the massive youth unemployment which characterised the early 1980s (for example Byrne, 1987). Although labour

issues are not central to the concerns of my research, it is worth noting that much of

what was written on this theme was sympathetic to structural rather than to individual

explanations for young people's unemployment.

The HMI, on cue, reported on 'alienated' youth in the inner cities whose

concerns were unemployment, racism, poor amenities including housing, lack of

recreational and Youth Service facilities (DES, 1987a:12). A less problematic view of

youth, well rural youth, is presented by Kennedy (1984) but it is not one which has

stood the test of time. Perhaps this merely reflects a societal lack of interest in that

which is not threatening.

Conversely, the one percent sample survey of Wolverhampton's 16 to 24 year

olds, undertaken in 1984 (Willis et al, 1985;) which examined the social condition of

young people in the Borough alongside a critical review of Local Authority services,

both generic services affecting young people and young person specific services, has

been influential. Its analysis was in terms of class and gender and race and this set the

tone for work which was to come. It inspired similar, but universally less well

resourced attempts, in other parts of the country, the first of which was in Bradford

(The Bradford Youth Research Team, 1988). These studies went a long way towards

saying something which came from young people themselves, but the power of the

collective knowledge was retained with adults. The Bradford study could further be

criticised for failing to make the most of its findings. Young people were not directly

benefited by the knowledge acquired and through too little interpretation, neither

could the adults have been. Another study was undertaken parallel with, or even

before the Wolverhampton one, by Gibbon and Waters (1984), but this, too, lacked

interpretation.

Kealy (1988) offers a challenge to the notion of needs based youth work and,

therefore, partially at least to Smith's (1982) understanding, which, in 'Creators not

Consumers' was based on Mia Kellmer Pringle's (1980) structure of children's needs.

He adds to the Coffield et al (1986) model of adolescence, in which a path is steered

through a variety of influencing factors, detailed as young people's 'concerns and interests', 'individual, group, institutional, regional, political and economic factors' and structural divisions (Kealy,1988:8). Youth work, he says, must address these levels of influence in combination.

That young people are not an homogenous group had been recognised for a long time, but this post Thompson period saw greater enthusiasm for engagement with the members of oppressed groups. Work with girls flourished in the early to mid-80s, reflected in publications like 'Working with Girls Newsletter' (NAYC, 1981 - 1986), 'Working with Girls: A Reader's Route Map' (Young, 1982) and 'Coming in from the Margins' (Carpenter and Young, 1986). Writing about young people, sexuality and youth work heightened as the threat of restrictive legislation loomed (see Tranchard and Warren, 1985; Kent-Baguley, 1985; 1988; Heathfield, 1987).

Critics of studies of young people, publishing in this era, argued that they drew attention to problematic and untypical images and young people (Baldock, 1982; D.M. Smith,1984). D.M. Smith (1984:43-44) classified sociological studies as treating young people as either a 'social problem', a 'political problem' or as 'deviant'. Kealy (1988) takes exception to the notion of young people's needs with which youth work people were almost obsessed, on the question of by whom they should be determined. Booton (1982) notes sardonically that the experiences of youth and youth organisations are interpreted and recorded by adults.

Youth Policy

In 1982, 'Youth and Policy' journal was launched, the first and the only long-standing independent forum for the debate of issues affecting young people, youth work and much broader than this, youth policies. This was a very important step in the development of youth work literature. It increased vastly the quantity of critical analysis, the diversity and the richness of the debate, on which people interested in young people can draw. The journal does not always have sufficient material from

which to select, so sometimes its offerings have been rather more dry or rather more

newsy than its aspirations, but much of the time, it finds a level which is analytical,

thought provoking and more or less accessible. More than this, it has encouraged a

broader view of young people and working with young people. It has presented

discussion on policies affecting young people and specifically youth policies, which

taken together comprise a more holistic view. Individual writers, most notably Davies

(1985; 1986) and, to some extent, Jeffs and Smith (1988) have developed the

integrated analysis as a framework for understanding the position of young people and

for understanding youth work.

Youth Work

Corrigan (1982) argued, in the first edition of 'Youth and Policy', that the

function of libertarian youth work is social control and creation of the next labour

force, but that the alternative non-directive approaches romanticize working class

youth culture. Youth policies, he goes on, affect young people of both working and

capital classes. Thus youth work, he concludes, is about challenging 'subordination'

and about involvement in the 'struggle' (Corrigan, 1982:2-3). A similar political

analysis is pursued by Taylor (1987) but this stance is relatively rare. Less overtly

political are the options presented by Leigh and Smart (1986): re-education,

opposition or no change.

'Interpretation and Change: The Emerging Crisis in Social Education' is the

confusing title of a National Youth Bureau project report, which differs from much

writing of the period, in that it addresses the question of purpose. 'Almost all youth

work purports to be about "social education" but that term in popular usage is so

abstract and high order as to be nearly meaningless' (Leigh and Smart, 1986:22). It

proposes, as an alternative, the notion of 'enfranchisement' (Leigh and Smart,

1986:26), which, with the best will in the world, surely suffers from the same ailment.

Embodied in the notion are the 'tridents' of the formal (legal), the informal (societal)

and the non-formal (personal) arenas and of the educating, exercising authority, befriending and sponsoring tasks of the youth worker. This is a brave attempt, and the 'second trident' is quite task oriented but practitioners are more comfortable with the writing which leaves aside high order terms in favour of task and value oriented analyses (Leigh and Smart, 1986:27-28).

M. Smith (1984) and Shuttleworth (1986) identify values inherent in youth work: honesty, commitment, reason, human freedom, justice, equality. They furthermore articulate broad tasks: creating dialogue, learning through doing, letting go, being clear about the hidden curriculum (M. Smith, 1984); talk and action, allowing necessary conflict, openness about the agenda in order that young people have real choices (Shuttleworth, 1986). Dearling and Sinclair (1982) de-cry reactive youth work because it leads to an understanding of youth work which is concerned with social control and recreation. They articulate their 'pro-active' model, comprising: creating potential groups, identifying group needs, support and development of groups and advocacy - developing recognition of groups (Dearling and Sinclair, 1982:22). These understandings are useful but they fall way short of an holistic youth work, rather than youth policy, comprehension of the work of youth workers and Youth Services.

Strawford and Lavell (1986:9) offer the following definition. 'Youth Work is an intentional activity based upon broad generic criteria of people work and targeted on young people.' This "answer" is not nearly as helpful as their questions around whether youth work should be analysed in terms of the nature of the work, the target group, the rationale for the work or the values which underpin the work. On values, they argue that people are co-operative and this is the model of humanity which underpins youth work.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate produced several issue based reports in the mid 1980s, including 'Youth Work in Eight Inner City Areas' (DES, 1987a), 'Youth Work Responses to Unemployment' (DES,1988) and 'Education Observed 6. Effective

Youth Work' (DES, 1987b). The latter was well received and all three of these are a mixture of superficial understandings of the position of young people, of the practices of youth workers and of the problems they experience. They observe, for example, that the 'skill and flair of individual workers' (DES, 1987a:12) is influential in the delivery of good youth work. It is not surprising then that Ritchie's (1986) analysis of HMI reports concludes that their findings are informed principally by the personal values and views of the Inspectors.

'Youth Work' (Jeffs and Smith, 1987), a collection of essays, by different practitioner authors, illustrating the different faces of youth work has been criticised for its 'menu' style approach (Lloyd, 1988). On first reading, I found the collection accessible, comprehensible and informative. On further reading, I have found complementary connections and tensions between different understandings of the values which inform the work and the practices engaged in. For example, Foreman identifies the explanation of "the why" as well as "the what" as what distinguishes youth work from leisure provision. This sits very comfortably alongside Rossetter's values for 'youth workers as educators': interchangeable teacher/learner roles; equality, trust and mutual respect; use of existing opportunities; creative thinking; valuing people for who, not what, they are. This, in turn, complement's Britton's understanding of youth social work, as making best use of the critical incidents in young people's lives to enable and empower them. In contrast, Teasdale and Powell, suggest a role for youth workers in the juvenile justice arena, and despite the path they carefully tread, there are clear dilemmas here around whether or not this is a youth work field. Thus the book reflects the ease and the tension which youth workers experience and which these youth workers, at least, understand to be key issues in their work.

The publication of 'Youth Work', was closely followed by 'Developing Youth Work' (Smith, 1988). Disenchanted with the use, misuse and abuse of the term "social education", Smith chooses, instead, the notion of informal education. He elaborates on this purpose of youth work, by suggesting the following question be asked of it.

'Will it enlarge understanding of well-being or enhance ability to think and act politically?' (Smith, 1988:143). He identifies three educative roles for youth workers: 'manager' of resources, 'educator' and 'organizing educator' (Smith, 1988:151-152). The strength of this argument lies with its application to much youth work which takes place in small voluntary organisations, ad hoc or more structured, rather than with restriction to professional bodies with substantially trained workers. Furthermore, it relates to ideas about the informal education of adults, which has been the subject of more rigorous analysis than youth work (for example Lovett, 1983), although like youth work, it rests in a multi-disciplinary position.

Alternative Themes

A number of alternative themes abounded in youth work literature in the early to mid 80s. In the main, they have little to say which enhances youth work understanding in the context of my research, but they are worth mentioning because diverse calls for attention served to muddy the waters and to make it increasingly difficult to find dry land. There were several reports on structure (for example Smith, 1987; 1989). There were accounts of tasks (Linnell, 1988; Rogers, 1988). There was rising concern regarding the need for and process of evaluation in youth work (for example, Feek, 1988). An unimaginative guide to research in youth work was written by Smith and Marsland (Smith, 1985). The cry of despair over youth workers' rejection of professionalism and theory and over the Initial Training Agencies' failure to contribute either to youth work research or literature continued (Jeffs and Smith, 1987a; 1989).

The Period of the Research Project

Young People

A large survey of more than 2,000 young people was carried out by Furnham and Gunter (1989). It explored the social attitudes of young people in a large number

of subject areas and was set in a broadly youth work framework. There was an attempt to reflect young people's understanding of society in a discussion which drew on this research and others (Furnham and Stacey, 1991) but the breadth of material covered makes it difficult to pick out anything very significant. Furthermore, the young people whose views were collated were not a representative sample, which damages the credibility of any generalisations.

Willis (1990a; 1990b) published another large scale piece of research, which relied heavily on qualitative methods, employed in quantity, and whose conclusions found common interpretations and creative activity in the every-day lives of young people. Far from being ignorant of culture, young people were found to be interested, constantly engaged, knowledgeable and practised in their daily, cultural activities. This was a little understood area, although it is often said that what are thought of as the traditional forms of art, do not reach ordinary people. This work suggests that to keep art in the opera houses, or take opera to the community centre are equally irrelevant strategies. People working with (young) people would be better advised to recognise the cultural forms of the people with whom they are working.

The view of young people as systematically different from one another is well established in this period and the understanding was sometimes applied where it is inappropriate. The image of rural youth, as different from urban youth, is one that had been perpetrated in Norfolk, so it is particularly pertinent to this discussion. MacDonald (1991:17) found what he terms 'locale' as informing the relationship between social class and youth. He describes 'locale' - the notion of immediate community, a particular estate, one half of an estate as opposed to the other, one side of the street - as more important in informing young people's own views of self, their own expectations of life, than any other single factor. MacDonald conducted his research in a rural locations but readily admits that his findings may be equally applicable in urban settings. Fabes and Banks (1991) are more explicit.

*In attempting to convince policy makers, funders and managers that
rural youth work is important, there has been a tendency to
overstate the claim that it is different ... it has been recognised that
the needs of young people living in rural areas are no different than
those of young people in urban areas. But the ways in which the
needs of rural youngsters are or are not met are different.*

(Fabes and Banks, 1991:4)

Jeffs and Smith (1990) published the third book in their series in which they

address a resurgence of concern with social class themselves and edit the work of

other writers who examine the inequality issues of age (Franklin and Franklin), gender

(Spence), sexuality (Kent-Baguley), race (Popple) and disability (Blackburn). Most of

these locate the issues firmly in a youth work framework, so the book, like the first in

the series (Jeffs and Smith, 1987) gives a holistic view, in a manageable format and is

written by people who have thought about the individual issues, in the context of the

whole and of youth work.

The Curriculum Debate

Three Ministerial Conferences took place in 1989, 1990 and 1992,

respectively. The thrust of them was to determine the targets, the methods, and the

outcomes of the Youth Service and further to establish the performance indicators by

which the outcomes could be measured. This surprising measure of Government

interest in the Service stimulated and encouraged a wide ranging discussion about

curriculum in the Youth Service. Those who participated were under pressure to reach

agreement, for there to be some kind of national unity, but there was very significant

resistance to loss of local autonomy (NYB, 1989; 1990; NYA, 1991; 1992). The

tangents at which the participants took off were matched by the delay in calling the

second and third conferences (ibid.). The delay between second and third was so long,

eighteen months, that another national conference, 'Realities and Reactions', on the

same issues, took place in between. Sawbridge (1991) writing between the second and

third conferences, expressed surprise at the papers which emerged from the NYA

which gave the purpose of the Service as 'to redress all forms of inequality' (NYA, June 1992: 21), since other participants had not come away feeling that this measure of agreement had been reached.

Davies (1991) argued powerfully, in response to the Government cry that the Service articulate its discrete outcomes. He rejected the suggestion that the function of the Service is 'supplementary', 'complementary' or 'compensatory' (Davies, 1991:4) as suggested by Alan Howarth MP, in his key-note address, at the first Ministerial Conference. Davies says,

> *that what constitutes the essential 'core' of the Service's*
> *contribution to work with young people is not 'content' but method*
> *and process. That these come together as 'youth work' - and that*
> *this still gets its most thorough-going and effective expression*
> *within Youth Service settings.' '...a distinctive Youth Service*
> *practice does exist and that .... practice is called 'youth work'!*
>
> (Davies, 1991:4)

He goes on to describe youth work as a combination of 'principles' including that: the setting is the choice of the young people; the process begins with the young people's concerns; the young people themselves constitute the client group, not the range of other people who might be concerned about them; the work is sensitive to home and community; the process honours the values of the young people; it tips the balance of power in their favour; it involved feelings as well as knowledge and skills; it promotes a critical response; it promotes a strengthening of young people's collective identity. Davies contests the possibility and the desirability of separate outcomes, since, in his view, the process and product, that which young people take away with them, are inseparable.

Others have presented discussions which are not the same but which do nothing to undermine Davies' view. For example, Cockerill (1992) argues that the imposition of a core curriculum negates that which is distinctive about youth work, for youth work's crucial elements are the voluntary involvement of young people, the

negotiation of what, how and why youth work activity takes place and recognition that young people are part of and product of communities and society.

The concept of effectiveness was given some attention and this stems directly from Ministerial concern with performance indicators. At one end of the scale, the tendency was towards the mechanistic (for example, EARAC, 1990). More encouragingly, the idea of evaluating the 'organised anarchy' which is the Youth Service was discussed by Watts (1990:24).

Few, however, addressed the curriculum debate holistically. If anything, the Ministerial Conferences served initially to dismantle rather than to strengthen the framework within which the curriculum debate was taking place.

Practitioner endeavours continued to be concerned with the youth needs question. Shuttleworth (1990) addresses a variety of avenues of exploration to set youth workers thinking about youth provision in relation to people's needs, the ways that they learn and their reasons for doing things. The period sports a plethora of practitioner enquiries into the young people's needs question in general terms (Leeds City Council, 1989; Doncaster Youth Service, 1990) or in more specific domains, like drugs and substances (Norfolk County Council Matthew Project, 1990) or advice, information and counselling (Norfolk County Council Norwich City Centre Project, 1989). These enquiries suffered typically from poor sampling, from inadequate consideration of design issues like phrasing and ordering of questions, conducive setting for interviews, from inadequate analysis and from making unacceptable leaps from data to interpretation. The academic writers have, most of the time steered clear of the needs question. What youth work writers have given up, never attempted, perceived at best as a "red herring" or found politically unsavoury, continues to occupy the energies of youth workers.

Direction for the Youth Service is the subject of one of several NACYS (1989a) reports and three alternatives are presented: no change, an intervention more targeted at disadvantaged young people or widest coverage. (The other NACYS

reports of the year were on resources (1989b), working with girls and young women (1989c) and working with young people with disabilities (1989d).) Gutfreund (1993) argues, also on direction, but within a different framework, that the Youth Service, because of what he understands to be its very limited contact with young people, cannot be about anything, specifically social change, but the personal development of individuals.

In slating superficial concern with "issues", which had been fashionable in the Youth Service since Thompson, Jeffs and Smith (1989) repeat their cry for related theory and practice. They call for youth workers 'to demonstrate respect for their craft, draw theory and practice into an appropriate relationship and locate their thinking and practice within an active appreciation of the totality of the economic and social system in which they operate' (Jeffs and Smith, 1989:19). This is perhaps what Bamber (1990) sought to do in devising a model for identifying good practice. The values which lie behind youth work recur commonly in writing which addresses function, method and process. The 'core values' are identified by Bamber (1990:189), as 'autonomy, humanity, equality, democracy, justice [and] human potential'. Equality and challenging oppression (Nelson, 1989) or exposing oppression (Warren, 1990) are recorded as function and task but clearly they reflect a core value.

Youth Work Practice

Bamber (1990:191-198) addressed the "how to do it" question by articulating six 'key work processes': 'managing, working systematically, relating, programming, facilitating [and] empowering'. He furthermore argues that the specifics of youth work in any particular club or project are determined by the societal, community and organisational backdrop. Working from young people's experience and everyday activities is a commonly mentioned feature (Jeffs and Smith, 1992; Gordon, 1990; Warren, 1992). Warren (1992) describes, in writing about strategies for anti-racist youth work, asking questions as a task of youth work. Jeffs and Smith (1992:16)

present their argument that youth workers are 'informal educators with a specific re-mit to work with young people'. They detail the tasks as making and making the most of opportunities, assessing young people's readiness to learn, young people's engagement with the setting, the content and the method of their learning and another feature as commitment.

No-one has addressed specifically the business of the relationship between young people and youth worker, but it has emerged from Gordon's (1990) study of participation and from two separate pieces of action research into communicating the AIDS message in informal work with young people (Frankham and Stronach, 1990; Guy, 1991; Guy and Banim, 1991). Gordon (1990:33-34) finds several different aspects of commonality important for facilitating participation, particularly between young people and the youth worker. He details 'shared experience', 'common interest', perspective, and 'common goal'. Both of the pieces of work around AIDS touch very sensitively on a number of issues which relate to young people's learning.

Frankham and Stronach (1990) describe a piece of theatre, 'Love Bites', which toured youth clubs and schools in Norfolk and each performance was followed by discussions between young people and researchers. They sought to find out whether the play had achieved its objectives of bringing the issues closer to the young people, of increasing young people's understanding of their sexuality and of dispelling stereotypical myths. They found young people to be knowledgeable in the sense of already having accurate information on the subject, although the young people asked for more. They attributed this phenomenon to the importance of timing. Relevance of the message to each individual depends a great deal on the time, in relation to the young person's own concerns, that the message is presented. They additionally observed that much of the information young people had received about AIDS was based on adult ignorance of young people's actual beliefs and behaviour. The understanding of sex behind the "safe sex" message was so different from these young people's actual experience of sex that they found it difficult to connect the two. The

researchers further found out that young people found ridiculous messages about sexual behaviour when received from adults who they could not perceive ever being in situations like themselves. Young teachers and researchers had more credibility.

Guy (1991) was able to identify, from her peer education project, ten important implications for peer led AIDS training and some of these have much broader implications for youth work. She found that the young trainers had great expertise in assessing the interests of and the relevance of ideas and approaches to their peers. Their judgement was what made the training acceptable to young people. Commitment to the project on the part of adult facilitators was vital to the process, since young trainers found support, encouragement and reassurance necessary; this was time consuming both at the outset and when strategies needed to be adjusted at mid-points. The young trainers found their experience positive and demonstrated significant commitment, not being deterred by set-backs. They recognised their acquisition of knowledge around the subject area and their skills in training. They themselves, were impacted by the messages of the AIDS training programme. Their self-esteem and communication skills were enhanced. They experienced personal satisfaction and the feeling of being needed. They found the partnership between adults and young people beneficial because it facilitated mutual understanding and effective delivery. It was a developmental process in which young trainers' comfort with their roles grew with awareness of their competence and confidence in their abilities. Young people had 'directness, credibility and willingness' (Guy, 1991:74) to which organisation, training and evaluation was added resulting in capability on the part of the young people who became trainers.

The qualities and attributes found by Gordon (1990), Frankham and Stronach (1990) and Guy (1991; Guy and Banim, 1991) say something, with a degree of intimacy, about the nature of the contact between young people and adults which enhances understanding of youth work, although in the cases of the latter two pieces of work, this was not the prime purpose.

Similarly, several authors have addressed issues concerned with youth work training which, almost in passing, say something useful about the tasks youth workers must undertake. The shift from "empty vessel" style training to portfolio model training (Bolger and Scott, 1984; Wiggans, 1984; Redman, 1986) emphasises that potential youth workers already have some of the "competencies", the attributes which are necessary for youth work, the explanation of which is provided by Cartlidge (1989). The use of the term competencies has tended to reflect skills rather than knowledge and concern about this, in the context of more far reaching uses of the model, is expressed by Banks (1990). Jeffs and Smith detail a range of intellectual tasks for which informal educators need to be trained: critical thinking, reflection, reasoning and testing, repertoire, dialogue and handling uncertainty. These contributions develop the idea that the touch sensitive business of interaction between young people and youth workers requires knowledge of tasks and intellectual skills as well as the skills in performing the tasks.

Answering the Youth Work Question

The literature goes some way towards answering the youth work question, that is, what youth work is about and what the Youth Service ought to be doing. One text adds to another, or some, at least, are complementary to others, without there being a firm connection. There are also, however, oppositional views.

There has been, since the 1960s, an increasing tendency to view young people as different from one another, although sociological interest in young male friendship/peer groups persisted well into the 1980s. The differences are perceived, arguably most widely, as relating to structural divisions. They are further understood to relate to friendship group, to immediate community, to regional, political and economic factors. It has been suggested that youth is an artificial category, that there are fewer differences between young people and people in other age groups than there are between groups of young people, that structural divisions, economic and social

policy is more influential than age divisions, youth culture and youth policy. Interest in young people's needs and concerns continues, especially amongst practitioners.

Young people have come to be recognised as relatively powerless or as possessing negative power. Their culturally rich and creative lives have been observed and their expertise in their own culture has been acknowledged in very recent years.

The purpose of the Youth Service or of youth work heralds little agreement. One group of contributions to this debate is concerned broadly with education. This category includes personal development or individual growth, the provision of experience, as well as social education, informal education and democratic education. Another cluster is concerned with creating political change, including the challenge to and exposure of inequality or oppression. Some way between education and change lie empowerment and enfranchisement, notions which have a clear educational element but which also imply change in the balance of societal power. Conversely, there is a cluster concerned with maintaining the political status quo, social control and training. Association, young people's need to meet one another, is another thread. Fun, recreation and leisure are the concepts which remain at the light or, alternatively, the cynical end of the purpose debate.

Views vary over the issues of direction - scatter-gun or targeted - and age boundaries of the client group, so neither the Service, nor youth work as an activity can be defined, with any serious measure of agreement, in terms of its precise client group.

Values and principles offer more encouragement and, if not unity, then an absence of contradiction. Adding together the values and principles put forward, it is possible to extract a small group which are concerned with society: equality, humanity, optimism, democracy and justice. There is a larger cluster around views of young people: autonomous; recognition of, acceptance of and respect for young people's values and culture, interests and concerns, expertise and judgement in relation to their culture and concerns; young people's right to interpret their concerns, to be the client

group and to become involved in youth work on a voluntary basis. A third group of principles relates to the youth worker: honesty, confidentiality, trust, respect, common sense, consistency, flexibility and commitment. The final cluster is concerned with the nature of the intervention, specifically that it is sensitive to the young people's home and community, to the organisation from which it emanates and ultimately to society.

The youth work process encompasses talk and action. It is developmental, one stage leading from the previous one. It is informal. The young people are those who are interested or affected by the activity or the issue. They are accountable for their actions. The young people set their own objectives and determine the content, the method and the setting for their experience. The experience and its decisions are real ones, not fabricated to provide the opportunity, and there are real consequences. The process is a partnership between young people and youth worker(s). The relationship is an enabling one. The youth workers tasks are to:

involve young people; create groups;

assess young people's readiness, recognise critical points in their lives, use and make the most of existing opportunities;

connect 'private troubles' with 'public issues';

give young people their time;

ask questions, create dialogue;

explain and negotiate the what, the how and the why of the experience;

offer encouragement, support and reassurance;

promote a critical response and allow conflict;

strengthen young people's collective identity;

manage, creating access, to resources;

learn, teach, facilitate and organise;

let go.

There is some understanding around tension between young people and adults. Adults categorise young people into stereotypical types and young people develop a kind of reserve with adults. Adults are often ignorant of young people's actual values, beliefs and behaviour. The relative youth of adults is an issue for young people. The elements of the youth work relationship are: similar experience; common interest; shared perspective; common goal.

Much of the literature, with a few notable exceptions, is the view of a particular individual or small group. Often it is founded on a wealth of experience, as were the attempts of the Norfolk practitioners, and is consequently valuable but it lacks credibility in enhancing a broad understanding of youth work because the views collated here are rarely corporate and suffer from lack of a systematic approach. Most of the texts which are most useful in pinning down the nature of youth work were not published at the start of my research.

A common feature of the work reviewed is the little control given to or taken by young people themselves. Where questions have been asked at all, they have been asked of adults, by adults, and a little more appropriately of young people, by adults. This mould has started to be challenged in the last decade, but none of the research to date succeeds in firmly locating the power of the knowledge in the hands of the research population.

CHAPTER THREE

AN OVERVIEW OF METHODS

Guiding Principles

Awareness of the fragility of the Youth Service, belief in its worth, uncertainty about my ability to enhance its chances of survival through research and determination not to reduce them led to the adoption of several key understandings which were to direct the methods of my research project.

It would leave the Norfolk Youth and Community Service in at least as good a position as I found it, so there would be neither misuse nor abuse of the privilege awarded to me. I had heard Lord Henniker, then Chairman of the Rainer Foundation's Intermediate Treatment Fund, say, when addressing, in 1986, the Annual General Meeting of a small voluntary organisation which specialised in the diversion of young people from crime, that (experimental) youth work, like medicine, should, as its first consideration, do no harm. It had become a consideration at the forefront of my mind in my work as a youth worker and it seemed appropriate to apply it here, not directly to the lives of young people, but to the life of NYCS as an organisation.

Aspiration to this ideal involved recognition of the importance of the role of full-time youth workers in the Service in the maintenance of a positive organisational morale. The preservation of belief in self would require a degree of faith, on the part of the methods I was to select and shape, in the knowledge and skills of the work-force in general and, because of the centrality of their roles, the full-time workers in particular. The project would guard against "catching out" the incompetent, the uncaring and the lazy. It would not provide a big stick with which to drive organisational change from the rear. Rather it would attempt to provide temptation and motivation to pull positive changes to the fore. It would embody the idea expressed by the DPYCO at one of the early business meetings, 'It's exciting to see if we can get better!'

The approaches used were, throughout the term of the project, three-fold. It was policy-oriented research aiming to provide information to guide the Service of the future. The process needed, in order to fulfil this function, to encompass a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. It needed to produce outcomes, supported by empirical evidence, capable of giving rhyme or reason to the observations of practitioners and managers within and beyond NYCS. The production of hard data on which decisions about the direction and the resourcing of the Service could be based was thus a requirement.

All parties were further enamoured, especially at the outset, with two parallel activities. One of these was the project's potential for action research. This approach is closely linked to policy-oriented research in that it addresses policy and practice issues (Wilson, 1986). It has been described as having a cyclical relationship with policy, as evaluation informs action and so on (Adelman, 1993).

> *For interpersonal issues - for example, establishing helping relationships, different teaching styles, ... - action research is a very useful strategy.*
>
> (McNiff, 1988:7)

It involves a planned intervention, a sort of experiment, to see whether the intervention provides a solution to an identified social problem. Action therefore does not wait for formally reported and sanctioned outcomes with policy-oriented interpretations. The policy or practice action comes first and is followed by evaluation as part of the research process to assess its effect. It is an approach which respects the integrity of the practitioner, promotes his/her personal development and is a vehicle to his/her empowerment to improve practices with which s/he is dissatisfied and resolve problems with which s/he is familiar (McNiff, 1988). It is an ongoing process, often undertaken by practitioners, with the potential to continue long after the research, as such, has ceased (Bell, 1988). It encourages reflection and the sharing of problems encountered, which are often not isolated but similar to those experienced by others

(Wright Mills, 1959). These characteristics made it appropriate for use in the Norfolk project.

The action research element thus had the capacity to promote quickly the development of youth work practice. This posed an interesting challenge for the strictly hierarchical NYCS. Change achieved by this route would be communicated from youth work practitioners to managers, rather than the more usual path in the opposite direction. It was a particularly appropriate approach to use in youth work because of the frequency with which new demands are placed on the Service from within (Jeffs and Smith, 1988) and in light of the transformed political ethos of the day. Kurt Lewin is said to be the founder of action research. He first employed it in the course of creating a practical application for social psychology knowledge in the United States in the 1930s (Adelman, 1993). The approach was first used in the U.K. in the 1960s (Wilson, 1986), most notably in the Education Priority Areas (Halsey, 1978) which followed the Plowden Report (HMSO, 1967). The process had arguably become much less participative and much more a tool of management, in these later uses (Adelman, 1993). It had been popular with educators (Bell, 1988), in one form or another. There are many documented examples of positive educational change concerned with, for example, the shift to mixed ability teaching, curriculum reforms and teacher-student interaction, which have emerged from teacher action research endeavours within the classroom (Elliott, 1991). The Norfolk managers were, in some senses, following this educational lead.

The third simultaneous approach was that the research process itself would be youth work. It would facilitate the involvement of young people as equals with one another and with adults; those who participated would do so voluntarily; it would enable them to learn informally subjects of interest to them, in the style and at the pace of their choosing; it would enhance their social skills and their personal development; it would empower them. Knowledge is arguably power and youth work is arguably concerned with the empowerment of young people. It was appropriate then in a

research project located in a youth work setting that the involvement of young people in the creation and ownership of knowledge be sought.

The Survey of Youth Workers' Views

The first major undertaking of the research project was a survey of the views of youth workers about the young people with whom they were working, about the issues by which young people were being confronted and about the strengths of NYCS. There were four overlapping purposes to this stage of the project. The first was to create a data-bank of existing knowledge in the Service. The survey is an appropriate method for collecting descriptive material (Cohen and Manion, 1980). The second was to begin (for some youth workers) and to consolidate (for others) the process of asking questions to heighten awareness partly concerning young people, their lives and the impact of the Service upon them and partly concerning the possibilities of research in youth work. The third was to dress myself in familiarity with the county, its people and their concerns. The fourth was to create access, via youth workers, to young people themselves in the next stage of the project. I recognised youth workers as potentially powerful gatekeepers; I felt that by consulting them first and respecting their knowledge, their co-operation might best be secured.

3.1 The emphases of the survey of youth workers' views
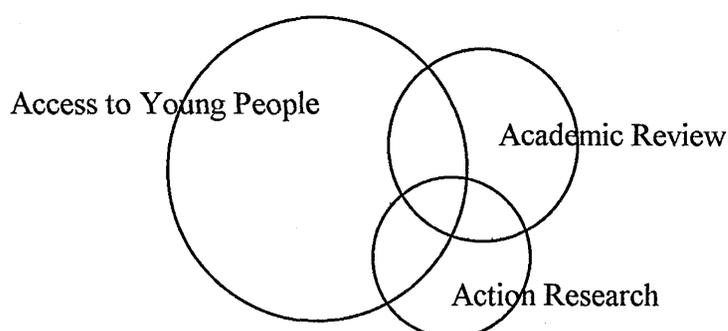
Staged sampling was ruled out because of the way in which this would have actively excluded some youth workers. Not only would this have defeated the access objective of this part of the project but, further, any form of sampling would have created systematic exclusions in the most sparsely populated parts of this rural county (Moser and Kalton, 1971).

The survey was consequently rendered a census rather than a sample survey and because of time constraints, there was no practical alternative to use of a postal questionnaire. I had several reservations about use of this type of a research instrument. I was concerned that the response rate was likely to be proportionately lower than could be expected from, say, an interviewer administered schedule. It would require a significant degree of literacy from participants and I knew that a proportion of competent part-time paid and voluntary youth workers might be daunted by the questionnaire. This was likely to contribute to bias in non-response (Bell, 1987; Oppenheim, 1992).

I was concerned about the quality of data which would be achieved. There would have to be compromise over the complexity of issues addressed and responses sought, since there would be no opportunity to offer spontaneous encouragement or explanation. There would be no observations to add to the survey findings (Oppenheim, 1992). The outcomes from this strictly quantitative approach might be unable to convey the warmth of feeling of youth workers for their young people and the strength of their convictions in youth work. The outcomes were likely to suffer from 'loss, condensation and compression' (Oppenheim, 1992:116) of data.

Furthermore, I felt that some youth workers would be suspicious of the motives behind the project and that the inevitable caveats which would form part of the introduction to the questionnaire would be unable to allay their fears. The postal questionnaire method would prevent the personal contact which might make the difference.

My feeling that youth workers were the key to reaching quickly young people in the Youth Service over-rode but never alleviated my anxieties about the type of research instrument. So access, amongst the purposes, was of paramount importance.

The first task was to secure the names and addresses of all adults associated with the statutory Youth and Community Service. Easier said than done! Full-time youth workers presented no difficulties; names and work-place addresses were readily available. Advised by the first steering group meeting at the end of March 1989, I approached, by letter the (now 34) DYCOs, with a courtesy explanatory letter to the AYCOs their line managers, for their records of part-time paid and voluntary youth workers.

The response was slow and there were several reasons for this. Firstly, I had been misadvised at the steering group meeting. Records of part-time paid workers were held at both area and divisional offices. Records of volunteers in county centres were held only at divisional offices. There were no complete records of volunteers in voluntary, divisional clubs and groups. Most DYCOs kept a record of only one contact name and address for each divisional club. The task was an easy one for some DYCOs whose records were complete and up-to-date; it was much more difficult and time consuming for others. By 27th April, I had received 19 replies and had spoken to each of the DYCOs still to reply. None of them refused to co-operate but some clearly resented what they felt was an additional task in the workload. Some felt threatened by the challenge to the hierarchy which my request for information posed; some of these chose to discuss my request with staff teams before complying, others simply delayed.

I had been invited to a meeting of each area team and a variety of other gatherings as part of my induction. I created and used every opportunity to talk about my approach to the research project with groups and individuals and gradually I found some common footing with them all. This process could not happen quickly enough to safeguard the timetable to which I was committed by the original proposal.

By the 11th May 1989, I had received a reply from each DYCO and from two AYCOs in respect of divisions where the DYCO posts were vacant. During May, I circulated a bulletin introducing the project to part-time and voluntary youth workers and spreading my request for contact with all workers; this produced a few more names. When the questionnaire was finally mailed on 12th June 1989, a spare copy was sent to part-time paid and voluntary youth workers with the request that it be passed on to anyone involved in youth work who had not received one through the post. Through these diverse means I achieved a mailing list of 524 adults working with young people in either county centres or in divisional youth clubs which were registered with NYCS.

The questionnaire was piloted, between 16th and 24th May 1989 with the five individual members of one county centre staff team, the DYCO of which was a member of the steering group, and with another DYCO. I used this approach because it was one which could be employed quickly without much time spent in explaining the ins and outs of the research project and because it gave me access to two youth workers in each of the full-time, part-time paid and voluntary categories. The changes which resulted were almost entirely cosmetic although the attempt to phrase some questions with greater clarity was made in the final version.

The questionnaire itself (shown at Appendix B) was organised into six sections: the characteristics of the young people; their needs, concerns and problems; the role of NYCS; the nature of the geographical locality; the respondent's characteristics; and the type of organisation with which s/he was associated. The pages were colour-coded according to section. It incorporated the use of open-ended and pre-coded questions, sometimes the latter following the former in respect of similar questions. It gave respondents the opportunity to refer to more than one discrete group of young people if desired. It was accompanied by an explanatory introduction, locating the survey within the project, assuring confidentiality and feedback to participants and requesting completion and return by 30th June 1989.

On 14th July, I sent 382 reminder letters to those who had not yet responded. On 8th August, seven full-time, 131 part-time paid and 198 voluntary youth workers on my list had so far not returned their questionnaires, so I wrote to them again. One month later, on 8th September, I sent my third and final reminder letter to 326 people. On 19th October 1989, I had 265 completed questionnaires, a response rate of 51% of the known figure of 524 youth workers, and the process of analysis began. The response rate was disappointing but not surprising, given the nature of a census by postal questionnaire.

I was able to find out the reasons why a total of 81 potential respondents did not complete their questionnaires. Just over two fifths of these were the reasons which affect all postal questionnaires: no longer at the address given, incorrect address, lost in the post, lack of time, illness and away from home. Well over a third of this group said that they were no longer involved in youth work and almost a quarter said they felt insufficiently qualified to answer the questions. One part-time youth worker in a voluntary youth club said to me, when I met him, 'I don't know the children well enough to answer these questions'.

Ten percent of the youth workers who responded to the survey were full-time, 43% were part-time paid and 47% were volunteers. This is probably a slight over-representation of full-time youth workers and an under-representation of voluntary workers.

The young people with whom the youth workers said they were working were aged, in the main, between 12.5 years and 16.5 years. Youth groups, more often than not, were comprised of more boys and young men than girls and young women. This seems a fair representation of youth club membership, in these respects at least, but clearly not of young people.

Completed responses were coded, the codes being recorded first on the questionnaires themselves. A data-base was subsequently created and a statistical analysis was computed. Early outcomes were the subject of a discussion with full-time

staff at the NYCS Staff Conference in January 1990. A fuller version formed a significant part of the research project's interim report to the County Education Officer, drafted in April 1990 and finalised in July 1990. Outcomes were reported back to the remainder of those who had participated via four editions of the research project bulletin, July to October 1990. (See examples of the bulletin at Appendix B.)

The Youth Work Initiatives

I wrote my first paper outlining the intentions and the process of this stage of the research project in April 1989 for discussion at the May steering group meeting. The bulk of the planning was done during July and August while I was waiting for practitioner survey questionnaires to be returned. This took so much longer than anticipated that it was impossible for the outcomes to inform the youth work initiatives as I had hoped. By the end of August, before any analysis had begun on the survey of youth workers' views, the plans were laid and shared with colleagues at the September meetings of the steering group and the NYCS Senior Management Team. By this time, I was acutely aware also of several potential stumbling blocks: that youth workers would perceive difficulty in finding time to participate; that travelling expenses for participating workers would not be made available from NYCS; and that no funds for project work by young people would be available from NYCS.

The objectives of this part of the research project were detailed, in August 1989, as follows.

To engage young people associated with County Centres and Divisional Youth Clubs/Groups in the process of determining and expressing their needs, within the context of NYCS.

To facilitate, encourage and support this practice amongst people working with young people.

To ensure that the outcomes are recorded.

To create access to young people not involved in the Youth Service and to units of voluntary organisations and youth movements.

(Steering Group Papers, August 1990)

3.2   The emphases of the youth work initiatives

Access to Young People

Academic Review

Action Research
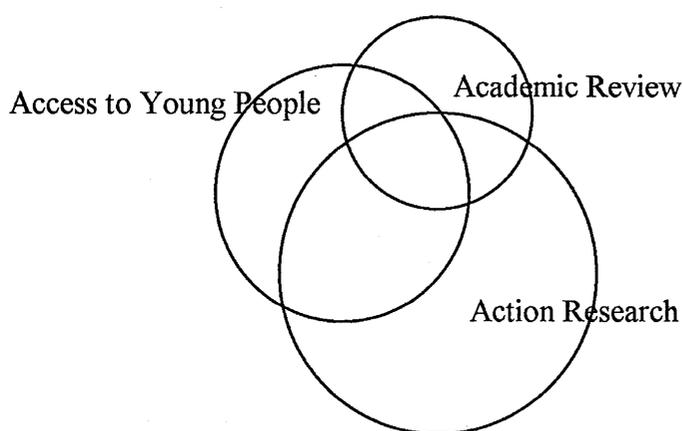
The key to the process was to be a series of workshops for practitioners who were interested in taking part. It was anticipated that the functions of these would be to put in touch with one another workers with similar professional interests and in relative close proximity, to explore existing mechanisms for the participation of young people (members' committees, forums and so on) and their appropriateness for this exercise, to identify the necessary competencies and confidence to undertake the work, to provide or to plan further training, to share and develop strategies. My role, beyond facilitator of the workshops was to be that of youth worker, consultant, or documentary maker, as determined by practitioners. I was not to be neutral and objective; I was to be involved, to be a participant and ultimately my engagement was

to change me; my perspective was 'interpretive' (Cohen and Manion, 1980:28). I wrote, in August 1989:

> *...the workshop is the melting pot for all those who want to add ingredients, stir the pot, eat the meal, and... do the washing up!*
> (Steering Group Papers, August 1990)

The plan allowed for those who attended workshops to undertake projects with their young people aimed at investigating their concerns and their aspirations within the possible scope of the Youth Service. It was anticipated that individual reviews of progress would feed into an evaluation of the initiative as a whole (by January 1990) and that there were four or five possible steps beyond this. Courses of action, appropriate in the light of their particular project and the skills acquired, may have been determined by young people and their workers. In any event, outcomes would be reported. Practitioners and their young people might have gone on to be researchers beyond their own youth groups with the unattached young people in their locality or with voluntary organisations nearby. It was also anticipated that projects might cease to work at almost any point in the process. Variety and diversity were almost themes of the early plan.

3.3   The anticipated process of the youth work initiatives

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┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────┐
│ BULLETIN & MEETING      │        │ SENIOR TEAM          │
│ SEPTEMBER 1989          │        │ MEETING              │
│ Who is interested?      │        │ SEPTEMBER 12TH 1989  │
└─────────────────────────┘        └──────────────────────┘
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Where does data already exist

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┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ WORKSHOPS OCTOBER 1989                       │
│ What level of interest, competence,          │
│ confidence? - 3 packages                     │
│ Where are mechanisms already in place        │
│ Are these appropriate alone, or in           │
│ conjunction with.....?                        │
│ What "new" strategies?                        │
│ Individually negotiated review periods        │
└────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────────┐
│ BULLETIN             │
│ NOVEMBER 1989        │
│ Catch more interest  │
└──────────────────────┘
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PROJECT WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

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┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
│ That which    │   │ Reviews by        │   │ Practitioners and     │
│ falls by the  │   │ practitioners and │   │ young people as       │
│ wayside       │   │ young people      │   │ facilitators          │
└──────────────┘   └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────┐
│ EVALUATION        │
│ Initial Attempt   │
│ JANUARY 1990      │
└──────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Courses of action │                    │ Practitioners and young │
│ decided by        │                    │ people as researchers   │
│ young people      │                    └──────────────────────┘
└──────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│ Outcomes reported │   │ with units        │   │ with other    │
└──────────────────┘   │ of other agencies │   │ young         │
                       │ in locality       │   │ people        │
                       └──────────────────┘   └──────────────┘
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In September 1989, an edition of the research project bulletin, which provided information about and invited workers to take part in research project workshops, was mailed. Furthermore, a letter with similar content was sent to all those with whom there was, by this time, some personal contact and I requested that the information given at the Senior Team meeting in September be passed on to the next Area Team meetings. Like my previous experience in Norfolk, the response was slow!

Ten workshops were eventually planned and three of these were subsequently cancelled. The first took place on 20th November 1989, at Loddon, and the last on 15th February 1990, at Hunstanton. The venues of the others were Thetford, Sheringham, Attleborough, Heartsease and Costessey.

The workshop content was a mixture of information dissemination, awareness raising and project planning and this was achieved through "hand-outs" as visual aids, "talk and chalk" to record ideas and issues, a multiple-choice quiz and an exercise which participants completed individually or in pairs or threes as they chose.

Around 50 workers and older young people, representing 23 youth groups, took part, although many more had indicated their intention to be there. There were three other youth groups which mounted projects but which did not have representatives at any of the workshops. Those who attended workshops and who undertook projects were the deciders of exactly what was studied and what was learned (Morgan, 1983). The most poorly attended workshop at Heartsease was attended by only two workers and this was really too small a number. The largest of the workshops sported 13 participants, excluding myself. I had been correct to anticipate diversity not just in the number of people but in the competencies, the previous experience and the interests of those who attended. At one level, the workshops were supported by one or two full-time youth workers who did not need my in-put but who came along to make their positive and supportive contributions. At another, there were raw, but potential-filled newcomers to youth work, who were stimulated by their involvement. At another, there were some volunteers, by no means

the youngest, who were clearly bemused, not to say bewildered, by the experience. I attempted to invest maximum energy and good humour into each delivery but I imagine my enthusiasm was seen by participants to wane when my requests for verbal participation met with stony silences; the Loddon and the Sheringham workshops were especially difficult to facilitate. At most workshops, my investment was repaid in full and the one at Costessey paid me interest. Workers were volunteering to work alongside others, outside their own clubs and groups, to share expertise and these offers were well received. My role here was truly that of facilitator but more commonly it was that of leader.

As a product of the workshops and of my personal contact with a handful of workers, some 26 youth work initiatives were started. Some workers wanted to use this stimulus or opportunity to make contact with "new" young people, outside their clubs and one voluntary youth organisation undertook an initiative of significant proportions. This meant that the shape of the early project plan was changing. The projects which I had anticipated would follow chronologically the youth work initiatives in Youth Service organisations were happening side by side with them. These were not variations on a theme, rather variation was the theme in the subjects of the investigation, in the methods employed and in the role which I played. I fulfilled the role of partner-researcher to these practitioner researchers, as my supervisors fulfilled the partner researcher role for me (Broad and Fletcher, 1993).

One of the roles I played, almost universally, in respect of each of the workers who indicated their intention to undertake a project, was that of the marker of progress. I made it a rule to persuade workers to give me dates by which time they thought they would have made progress and not to let that date go by without making a telephone call to find out whether progress was smooth or not. In the absence of dates, I telephoned fortnightly. This process went on from December 1989 until May 1990. This juggler was, during this period, keeping a lot of plates spinning - the analysis of the practitioner survey, 26 youth work initiatives and preparation of reports

of the first year's work for the County Education Officer - and I occasionally dropped one. In other words, I failed to make contact at a point when support from me might have made a difference to the determination of a worker to succeed. It was an uphill struggle to produce ideas for projects which might interest particular groups of young people, to devise means of working with them and recording the process, to tackle the thorny issue of evaluation all within contexts of existing youth organisation culture. Step by step, it became clear that a number of projects were not going to reach any tangible destination.

Meanwhile, the national youth work picture was changing. The first Ministerial Conference, at which NYCS had been represented, had taken place in December 1989 . Words like 'performance indicators' and 'national curriculum' were becoming commonplace. The climate had worsened and the initial enthusiasm of the County Education Officer for soft approaches to change had shrunk in the face of an increasing desire for shields with which to defend Norfolk's Youth Service. This was apparent at the presentation of the first year's report in April 1990.

The wind was uncertain but, in light of the difficulty of maintaining the youth work initiatives part of the project to produce material which, it seemed, would no longer provide the Service with what it perceived it needed, the June 1990 meeting of the steering group formally took the decision to change tack. 'Action research is not for the impatient' (Adelman, 1993). From then on, only those projects already started were aided to some sort of conclusion and report; there were 16 left.

The Survey Through Young People

It was necessary to devise a strategy which would provide Norfolk with the hard data now sought and which would provide more comprehensively the quality of understanding illustrated in a handful of the youth work initiatives. The constraints to which the project was subject were, by this time, evident. A mere nine months of the contract remained, a portion of which would be taken up bringing the remainder of the

youth work initiatives to some sort of resolution and report. Thus control of the timetable had to be mine; I could not allow a slow response from youth workers to stall progress, as had been the case in both of the previous pieces of research.

The "hard data" requirement guided me to think in terms of a quantitative approach, a survey. My search for quality encouraged me to think that it should be interviewer-administered. Determination to avoid the gatekeepers made me resolute that the interface should be directly between young people and myself. The idea of recruiting and training young people as interviewers emerged from the June 1990 steering group meeting. This idea had all the ingredients I sought and had the added advantage of enabling a larger sample to be interviewed than I could achieve alone and of enabling the project to retain the participative theme with which it had started. Bell (1987) cautions with respect to the problems associated with interviewer created bias but I was to learn by experience of the own culture research advantages of facilitating interviewing by peers.

Cranfield released the cash with which to pay the interviewers and a couple of months later, Norfolk agreed to extend the project by two months, for an April rather than February 1991 conclusion. The project was thus resourced to embark on this exciting venture which was to be a sample survey of 240 young people, aged 14 to 19 (the NYCS priority age range) in which young people aged 16 to 19 would be the interviewers, selecting these interviewees from amongst their acquaintances.

3.4   The emphases of the survey through young people

Academic Review

Access to Young People

Action Research
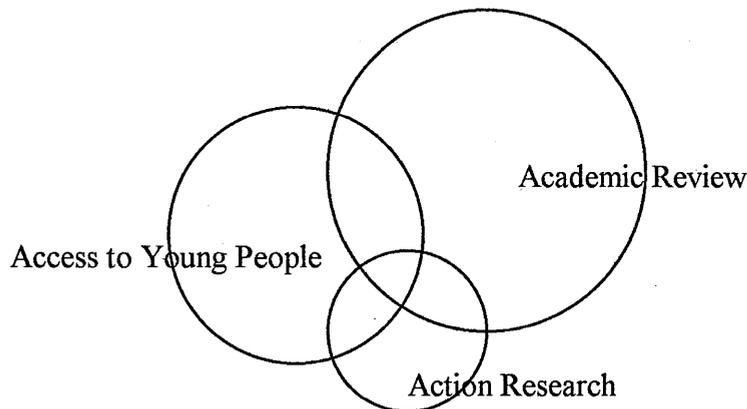
The method precluded the use of a random sample which would have involved young people approaching complete strangers, albeit other young people, as this exposed the interviewers to unacceptable risks. The quality of data which could be obtained by the employment of young interviewers, was thus weighed against the benefits of an admittedly more systematic approach to sampling.

The sample was drawn in stages. The first sampling issue encountered was geographical. It was necessary to ensure that young people from urban and rural, coastal and in-land locations were included in the sample. Furthermore it seemed necessary to ensure that sampling locations from all compass points of the county formed part of the sample. Differences amongst young people and styles of youth work seemed to me to be attributed frequently by youth workers to the differences in nature of the different types of locality. Without supporting this theory, it seemed appropriate to explore it and to ensure that outcomes of the research could not be discounted by youth workers for failing so to do.

There were 84 county electoral divisions. These were first divided into four geographical areas: city and suburbs, the most densely populated and arguably best catered for part of the county; East Norfolk, including most of the coastal, holiday belt; South and rural mid-Norfolk; North and West Norfolk, including the sparsely populated Fens. This took care of the main types of locality and the compass points.

The electoral divisions in each area were then listed in alphabetical order and a random number table was used to select either two or three, proportionate to the number of divisions in the area. To each one selected, a neighbouring one was added in an attempt to give the ten sampling locations more natural boundaries, easier for the young interviewers to work within, than those achieved by use of the artificial boundaries of electoral divisions. The sample was thus a staged sample which attempted to overcome the potential problems of difference between target and survey populations and to avoid excluding the most sparsely populated parts of the county (Moser and Kalton, 1971).

I was conscious that electoral divisions are imperfect tools at the best of times and particularly so when seeking a sample of young people, the vast majority of whom are too young to be listed on the electoral register. There was some informal evidence to suggest that young people were not evenly spread throughout the county, some locations attracting a disproportionate number of retired people. By contrast the University ward of the city was likely to have a disproportionate number of young voters. I examined, as an alternative, school lists but these were comprehensive only for young people up to the age of statutory school leaving. I also approached the Careers Service but its information on young people after their first post-school year was very patchy. I found no alternative to my imperfect tool.

Information relating in detail to the composition of county electoral districts was held, in a variety of formats - maps, lists of street names - by the Electoral Registration Offices of Norwich City Council and the other five District Councils in the county. With the exception of Norwich, which sent me a detailed map following my telephone request, I had to telephone, write, and visit each one to obtain the information needed.

The sample was to be divided equally by age within the age range and by gender. The social class of young people is difficult to determine, yet is likely to be an important independent variable. No sure way of achieving a cross-section within the

sample and of identifying it as such was found. It was assumed that all of the young people aged 14 and 15 would be in full-time education. I attempted to include a proportionate mix of young people in and out of full-time education for those aged 16 and over. (Since the survey was conducted during the autumn term of the 1990/91 academic year, comparatively few of those in final year of statutory school, would have had their 16th birthdays.) I was able to obtain from the Norfolk Careers Service the percentage of fifth year pupils returning to full-time education in 6th form and F.E. colleges for the previous four years. It had risen from 40% in 1986 and 1987 to 46% in 1989 and it was the impression of Dominic Low, the Deputy Principal Careers Officer, that, while still below the national percentage, the figure had risen again in 1990, but the figures were not yet available. While recognising that the number of 17 year olds in full-time education would be fewer than the number of 16 year olds, I determined that 50% of 16 and 17 year olds in my sample would be in full-time education. I was unable to find any figures for 18 and 19 year olds in full-time education in the county, but it was generally accepted that these young people were more unusual than usual so this was the first of several considerations on which interviewers were given guidance rather than strict quotas.

Much consideration was given to the extent to which interviewers themselves should reflect the characteristics of those with whom interviews were sought. My experience of working with young people indicated that young women would make better interviewers than young men but I was reluctant to narrow my options since I had no way of knowing how easy or difficult it would be to recruit young people for the task.

On 6th September 1990, I wrote, as a matter of courtesy to all NYCS full-time staff and to the Heads of voluntary organisations, sharing my plans for the survey and saying that if they knew any young people who might be interested in becoming interviewers, they were welcome to make contact with me. This produced names, addresses and telephone numbers for 49 young people, almost all of whom were

unsuitable because they did not have a range of personal contacts in one or more of the sampling locations or because they were not interested. Despite the pattern which emerged here, I telephoned each and every one of the young people and wrote to the adults who had suggested them, thanking them for their interest.

I successfully recruited young interviewers by making personal contact with youth workers and young people with whom I had worked in previous parts of the project and enlisting their help in finding young people. I thoroughly exploited all of the contacts I had succeeded in making in Norfolk and help was not confined to the people I had met during the course of my work. I contacted people I knew who lived in particular villages to see whether they had any likely neighbours.

I contacted each young person by telephone, explained how I had come by his/her name and phone number and asked if s/he was interested to find out more. I told them briefly what would be expected of them and told them that their expenses would be met but not how much they would be paid. I satisfied myself that the young person was interested, likely to be sufficiently literate to handle the interview schedule, sufficiently confident to set up interviews and knew of a number of young people in the appropriate age range in one of the sampling locations who could be approached. This done, I asked again whether the young person wanted to proceed. Several of them had other commitments which needed to be kept in the picture. Some wanted to discuss their decision with me. Others took a day or two to think about it. I eventually managed to recruit 33 young people. It was extremely difficult to recruit in one of the locations, where I eventually settled for a group which included two fifteen year olds. I had already accepted, with reservations about their examination year at school and about putting them under too much pressure, one or two other 15 year olds who presented themselves as particularly interested.

Almost all of the interviewers attended one of five group training sessions held at different venues in the county: Great Yarmouth, Attleborough, Norwich, Aylsham

and King's Lynn. A small number of interviewers were trained individually or in pairs, at other times, because they were unable to attend one of the group sessions.

The training sessions included an opportunity to discuss some of the general interviewing issues, for example, creating a conducive atmosphere, people's right to refuse to participate in part or in all of the survey, recording, dealing with flippant responses, dealing with distressing responses (Atkinson, 1971). It enabled interviewers to learn to handle the interview schedule itself. From the quota for each sampling location, interviewers chose, in turn, the characteristics of the people they would interview; thus interviewers had in mind the ages, the gender and the occupations of their friends and acquaintances, when agreeing to undertake specific interviews. Each interviewer who had 18 and 19 year olds in their quotas were requested to interview no more than one who was in full-time education.

Race was another issue on which interviewers were given advice to include black and Asian young people if they were able; few black or Asian young people were living in Norfolk, so strict sampling was ruled out. Perhaps most important, the training sessions were, for most young people, the first and only pre-interview opportunity to meet me. It was vital that I used the meeting to establish a rapport with them, to promote loyalty to the project while ensuring that they felt they could contact me if they felt there was anything they needed to discuss.

Each interviewer was given a "kit" (Appendix C) comprising a set of notes on interviewing to use as reference, a letter to certify bona fide involvement, a brief explanation of the project to use when asking friends and acquaintances to participate, a list of the specific interviews the interviewer had agreed to carry out (completed during training), maps and/or lists of street names of their sampling locations, one interview schedule (with accompanying showcards), one return-paid envelope and an expenses claim form.

Following training, each interviewer completed one interview and sent the schedule to me. If there were any problems with it, I contacted the interviewer to go

over the correct procedure. Content that the interviewer was reasonably competent, I sent the remainder of the interview schedules required. One interviewer completed as many as 11 interviews, one as few as three but most completed six or seven. Only one young person recruited failed to complete any interviews at all. The young people were paid, on completion, £5 per interview.

I set aside several evenings each week to telephone those I had not heard from for ten days or more. I had much contact with those who found the task most difficult and less with those who found it straightforward. The greatest dilemma, for me, was in balancing the process of supporting young people in undertaking this challenging experience, of youth work, against my desire for the greatest possible number of completed interviews. Whenever there was potential for conflict between a young person's other interests and their involvement in the research project, for example a short spell of illness leaving the young person under the weather or feeling that s/he had fallen behind with school work, I tried to help the young person decide where his/her greatest interests lay.

The strategy cannot have significantly influenced the number of returns, as by 14th January 1991, the final deadline, I had received 201 of a potential 240 completed interview schedules. The bulk of those which were not achieved were not interviews to which interviewers had agreed but failed to deliver, rather they were interviews to which none of the interviewers could commit themselves in the first place.

The interview schedule itself (shown at Appendix D) was designed in seven sections. The sections on the respondent's own characteristics, his/her involvement in youth organisations, activities and his/her relationship with adults (informed by the learning of the youth work initiatives part of the project) were a straightforward mixture of pre-coded and open-ended questions, using showcards where appropriate. The questions, but not the process were piloted with young people at Swaffham and Fakenham County Youth Centres. The employment of young interviewers was not piloted until the first of the training sessions.

The respondents were all aged 14 to 19 and spread evenly across the six year age span, with almost equal numbers of young women and young men of each age. All of the 14 and 15 year olds were ar school. Half the 16 and 17 year olds, but only a handful of the 18 and 19 year olds, were still in full-time education. In a pre-coded question on race and nationality, the young people described themselves as overwhelmingly, though not exclusively, as 'U.K. White'.

In another question, a fifth (20%) described themselves as living in the city or suburbs, over a third (38%) said they were living in towns, almost as many (34%) in villages and the remaining 8% said they were living in the countryside.

3.5   Where the young people were living
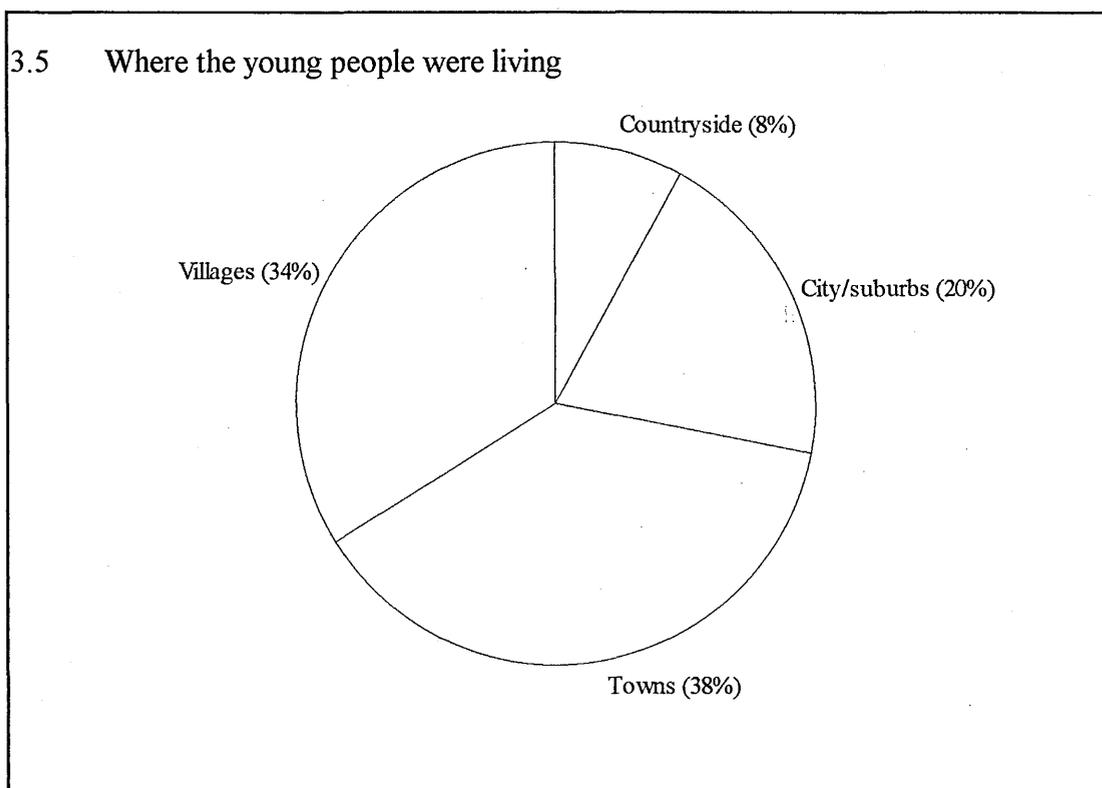
In these respects at least, the sample seems to be reasonably representative of Norfolk's young people.

A further small data-bank was created from the interviewers themselves. Each interviewer completed a very brief questionnaire about themselves. I maintained

records of my written, telephone and personal contact with them. The interviewers attended, in addition, a de-briefing session or if this was inconvenient, they completed another short questionnaire, asking how they had found their experience.

The Norfolk project's central thrust was concern for the positive development of youth work in Norfolk, not with the establishment of theory. It encompassed the professional beliefs and commitments of both practitioner researchers and other youth workers in the organisation. It was embroiled in local, organisational, political issues; it was not a neutral enquiry. It was very much a project of its time, taking place side by side with almost unprecedented Government interest in youth and youth policies (Davies, 1991). The initial problem was rooted in practice, the question was defined and re-defined employing practice wisdom rather than intellectually manipulated concepts; the methods of research were diverse and developmental; the methods of communication better reflected the practices of the organisation than those of a research tradition; the tension between creativity and rigour was maintained. These characteristics are common to much practitioner research (Broad and Fletcher, 1993).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE METHODS OF THE YOUTH WORK INITIATIVES

The preceding methods chapter gave a broad overview of the research strategy and its methods. It was fairly comprehensive in its description of the process of both the survey of youth workers' views and of the survey of young people. The youth work initiatives warrant further examination for two main reasons. There was considerable diversity within the approach and this is necessarily omitted from the broad description given. Furthermore, there was considerable learning about research in youth work and about youth work itself, from the process of these pieces of research which involved young people.

The youth work initiatives can be divided into two main categories: those which achieved some sort of recorded conclusion and those which did not. This is an imperfect classification since a small number of projects fall between the two. There was one which produced recorded outcomes which were not useful. Two youth clubs found that their first attempts floundered and these projects were subsequently replaced by new pieces of work.

Escaped

Including the three projects which could be classified either as projects which successfully concluded or as projects which did not, there were 13 projects which failed. The purpose of examining these is to explore the reasons for their failure. The value is to promote learning about youth work and about research in youth work.

At the Outset

The most notable stage of failure was at the outset. Of over 500 adults identified as working with young people in the county, approximately 50 came along to research project workshops and around 30 made some sort of commitment to

research with their young people, or to provide me with access to the young people they were working with. So the project failed to secure the interest of a large proportion of youth workers.

It was a large venture to be supported by one researcher and there is a sense that it found its own level in that I probably could not have supported nor did I court the interest of more than the total of 29. Personal contact produces the best possible response from any community and my capacity for this was strictly limited.

Two aspects of the establishment of the research contract may have been continuing to influence the extent to which full-time youth workers in particular were willing to co-operate with the project. The first of these concerned the relationship between NYCS and Cranfield. Prior to making the approach to Cranfield, NYCS management had asked full-time staff whether any of them would be interested in undertaking the research. Several members of staff had expressed an interest, then the question was withdrawn and after exploratory talks with both Norwich City College and the University of East Anglia, the contract went to Cranfield. This created a sense that staff had been denied a valuable opportunity for personal development. It also felt, to staff, as though the research project had been thrust upon them rather than organically grown from within. It further implied, to some, a sinister agenda. It may have been suspected that the research project was in some way about providing managers of the Service with hard information to use against individuals or whole groups of staff. The workers were understandably reluctant to volunteer for their own "execution".

The second contractual issue was concerned with the contract's payment and DYCO salary scales. In 1988, JNC salary scales were re-designed with a designated point of transfer from each point of the old scales to a point on the new. It constituted an average pay rise of 12.5% in a year when most public sector settlements were between 5% and 6%. Many local authorities were slow to implement and/or failed to follow the designated points of transfer or did neither but groups of staff nevertheless

appealed against the point of the new scale to which their posts were assigned. There were so many appeals from groups of staff all round the country that the JNC was still hearing them 12 months later. I had negotiated a contractual fee equivalent to JNC 111b. The Norfolk full-time staff were, en bloc, negotiating for JNC 111a against the lower point which they had been offered. This was clearly the reason that Norfolk County Council had offered the contractual fee rather than employ me directly and pay me the salary requested. The money for paying me, one post, was not at issue but the LEA was unwilling to establish anything which could be interpreted as a precedent. So I was being paid more than the Norfolk full-time staff were even negotiating for and this was clearly salt in the wound created by the decision to contract Cranfield. The pay issue was resolved in the summer of 1989 and by the time the payments were back-dated and the annual increment awarded, the Norfolk full-time staff were being paid the same amount as I was.

In the autumn of 1989, when the youth work initiatives part of the research project began, I was still attempting to dissolve my frustration over my ignorance of the internal 'advertisement' of my post and of the dispute between staff and management over pay. Some youth workers may have felt similarly baffled.

Some youth workers genuinely failed to see the relevance of this project to their day to day work. If they perceived their role as either paid or voluntary providers and this idea had not been effectively challenged before, then the research project was unlikely to bring about a change of heart. Some found it superfluous. Finding out about the needs of young people was their every day business so participation in the research project felt unnecessary and the communication with me and with other colleagues felt like an additional task in a busy programme.

It is, perhaps, easier to explain interest than disinterest, but that disinterest was demonstrated is evident from my diary of recordings. The newly appointed DYCO from Fakenham attended a research project workshop in January 1990.

12th February 1990
Phoned youth worker to follow up ideas from the workshop. She had
not yet thought much about it. We agreed I would call back week
beginning 12th March 1990.

14th March 1990
Phoned youth worker. Left message requesting she return my call.

19th April 1990
Phoned again to find she is on annual leave this week.

25th April 1990
Phoned youth worker. Agreed that if I can design something she can
implement in the course of an evening's work, she will be happy to
do so, returning it to me for analysis and write up.

21st June 1990
I have prepared a small project. Phoned youth worker to arrange a
date for implementation. She is on annual leave till 2nd July 1990.

9th July 1990
Phoned youth worker. She will not now have any contact with youth
club members until September!

By this time, the decision to complete only those initiatives already started had been taken so this one slipped through the net.

Of those who expressed an initial interest, one youth worker that I know of but perhaps many more, was unable to come up with a question within the 'needs' question which was of relevance and interest to the young people with whom he was working. This youth worker was unable to attend a workshop, so I arranged to meet him to discuss the possibilities with him. My diary of contact with him is as follows.

27th March 1990
Met youth worker and discussed the possibilities for his young
people to get involved. Left him to talk to his young people to
identify an appropriate question and come back to me after the
Easter holidays.

20th April 1990
Phoned youth worker. He feels he has made no progress. I agreed
to contact him again in two weeks.

4th May 1990
Sent a note wishing him well with his efforts.

18th May 1990
Phoned youth worker to find he has started three weeks' annual
leave.

14th June 1990
Sent a card with encouraging message.

9th July 1990
Phoned youth worker. He feels he has made no progress. I agreed
to phone again in a few weeks.

20th August 1990
I have been unable to reach youth worker by phone so wrote letter,
requesting information and offering help with piecing together
findings or his notes of the process.

6th September 1990
Phoned and left message asking him to return my call. When he did,
he still had made no progress so I arranged to lend him 'Look at
what you're doing'. He promised me something by 21st September
1990

4th October 1990
Sent "last call" letter.

The youth worker was unable to come up with a question of interest and relevance to

the young people he was working with.

Furthermore, the contact between us was almost always made by me. This may

be wholly attributed to what the youth worker felt was a lack of progress. Nothing had

happened so he had nothing to say. He may have been embarrassed and consequently

reluctant to discuss the initiative because of this. I had the feeling with this project and with others that had failed to progress that I had not succeeded in facilitating ownership of the work by the youth workers responsible. Because the youth worker did not own it, he did not take responsibility for it and because he did not take responsibility for it, it did not happen.

Problems at the Planning Stage

Most of the inadequacies of planning came to light later, but are recorded here to retain the chronological order of occurrence. Planning problems affected not only the projects which failed to reach any kind of recorded conclusion but also some of those whose conclusions were much more limited than they might have been.

There were two projects which were adaptations of earlier surveys in the region. The 'Youth Matters' survey had been undertaken and concluded in Thetford (Norfolk CC, NYCS Southern Area, 1989), prior to the start of my research project and this had been based on a survey in Essex (Watts, 1988). The Thetford one was the foundation for the Belton and Bradwell survey. The first of these in which I was involved was at Belton and Bradwell, where a newly appointed DYCO had undertaken the survey with over 600 young people at three local high schools, with a view to using the information to develop an appropriate curriculum at the new county youth and community centre, which was still being built at the time of the survey. The DYCO, who had not been able to attend any of the workshops, made contact with me when the data had been collected and he wanted some help with coding and analysing. Unfortunately, there were huge problems with the questions: there were ambiguous ones; there were pre-coded answers which were not mutually exclusive; the design was complicated in places and it was clear that the respondents had not understood what was required of them. On reflection, some of the questions seemed to have little relevance and the answers to others, little credibility. Perhaps the greatest error concerned the failure to take a sample. The Belton and Bradwell survey was saved by

coding a sample of just the parts of the survey which seemed interesting and which had avoided the worst of the design problems.

On 12th February 1990, I received a telephone call from the DYCO at Martham and Stalham, to say that he wanted to undertake a survey amongst young people he had not previously been in touch with. We agreed that he would draft something and send it to me so that I could advise him. On 4th May 1990, I had received nothing so I wrote to him enquiring after progress. In reply, almost by return of post, I received a short letter saying that the survey was already in progress with a copy of the survey form enclosed. To my horror, it was a replica of the Belton and Bradwell survey!

These full-time youth workers had failed to identify the necessary resources - the skills to design, code and analyse surveys - to undertake the projects they planned. They had consequently failed to secure the necessary resources - to acquire the skills or to arrange for the help of someone with the skills.

The important question here is how the situation in which youth workers fail to know how little they know of a particular strand of their business can arise. Many full-time youth workers of the current generation were trained originally as teachers and so may have had no relevant training in this aspect of the work. Full-time youth work training courses touch on research methods and this touching without grasping may be one of the sources of the problem. Many youth workers begin their post-qualification careers with an "understanding of" rather than the "skills in" or "experience sufficient to undertake" statistical research. This is perhaps only one symptom of a disease which permeates the occupation. Youth workers undertake so many different tasks in the course of their work and they are accustomed to learning by experience. They develop a kind of courage about setting off into the unknown and in the imprecise world of facilitating the personal development of others, this often serves them well. The more precise the demands of the work, the less useful the courage seems to be.

The research project at Attleborough Intermediate Youth Club failed because of a similar but different problem. The part-time youth worker at the youth club decided to tape record interviews with some of the youth club members. He consulted me at the outset and one of the issues we discussed was the skill involved and the amount of time it would take to transcribe or even to note the material contained in the tapes. I had the sense that he knew in his head, but not in his heart, what measure of commitment and time would be involved and although he battled on with it for months, his progress became slower and slower and it ground to a halt before conclusion. There seemed to me to be no way of protecting youth workers from themselves!

One of the greatest resources, which was difficult for youth workers to secure was time. At Hunstanton, the youth work programme was so busy, that the only time offered to me to meet young people was during an evening set aside for water-sports, when all of the young people would spend some time waiting between "turns". At Fakenham, contact time between youth workers and young people, was very limited during the summer. At Swaffham, it was months before the DYCO could find space in his diary to meet me to talk about the possibilities.

The Pitfalls of Implementation

A project was planned for me to implement at Cromer but on the 21st May 1990 when I arrived to make a start, there were only three young people in the youth club. I talked through the project with the DYCO and left my plans for the DYCO to carry out. By 13th June 1990, he had been in contact with three more young people and by the end of June we had responses from a total of 13!

The DYCO from Broadland division attended a workshop in January 1990. He was subsequently approached by a young woman, a member of his Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and a BTEC Health Studies student, who wanted to undertake a community survey as part of her college course. He informed me on 14th March 1990

that this would be the Broadland contribution to the research project. I was anxious to make contact with the young woman but each time I rang the DYCO he was unable to give me her name and telephone number although he said he had given her mine. I only found out who she was when I was given the completed study in September 1990. She had expended much time and energy designing and analysing several self-completion surveys about use of the youth and community centre but it was difficult to find anything of much relevance to the research project. An opportunity lost!

Even where youth workers had made every effort to secure the necessary resources, they sometimes proved unreliable, as in the case of the Hellesdon video project which produced a useful written report of the process but failed to produce a finished video recording. Video cameras were available from a central store of NYCS equipment for use by youth clubs and groups. The logistics of collecting and returning equipment prohibited making the equipment available for anything more than the minimum number of sessions. No funds had been centrally allocated for repairs and maintenance. The project experienced problems when the equipment ceased to function properly while in use by the group, when the previous group to use it had failed to return it on schedule and when it was malfunctioning upon collection. This sort of interruption significantly affected the momentum which was important for retaining the interest of both young people and youth worker.

The first attempt at finding out what the membership wanted from the youth club at Loddon was unsuccessful. Having attended the first of the research project workshops, the workers established a "wishing well" in which young people could place their wishes for the youth club. The young people used this opportunity of anonymity to write down the wishes which the workers felt they did not dare to say and have attributed to them, for example 'More bonking!' No-one can say how serious a representation of young people's concerns and desires this was, since the staff opted not to discuss the "findings" with the young people but to discard them and to begin

again. The young people were perceived by the youth workers to be unco-operative and disinterested in having a say about the youth club.

I met the DYCO and three long-standing youth club members at Diss in December 1989. A recent local newspaper report had centred on a group of unattached young people in Diss who said there was nothing for them to do. The group wanted to investigate what the young people within and beyond the youth club wanted to do. They planned to organise a range of activities for people to try and then to ask them which ones they would like to do more of. It arose during the discussion that there were some young people who would not take part in the "test and try" activities and that this reluctance might be concerned with the unwillingness of their friends to participate. This suggested to the group that they should also look at, and try to map, through the group's connections with other youth organisations in Diss, the social groups of young people in the town. The question they were exploring was whether young people's involvement was concerned more with the activity or with the social group.

I wrote up the notes of our meeting and sent them, along with one or two pieces of information which I thought the group would find useful on 28th December 1989. I phoned on 21st January 1990 and the DYCO said that he had not forgotten but that he had not done anything towards the project. By 13th March, the group of young people had moved on.

I found out that each member had many other commitments. There is a certain irony that this group of young people who, because of their active involvement in youth organisations, recognised the tendency of their peers to be members of either involved or uninvolved social groups but were unable to pursue the exploration because of their involvement. This is a phenomenon often mirrored in youth work. The young people who are easiest for professional youth workers to make and maintain contact with are those who are most socially skilled. They are the same young people who are easiest for adults in other professions and in the community, so they become

over-committed, eventually withdrawing from the organisation(s) in which they have least investment.

Interruptions to the Process

The structure of NYCS and of youth work in general sometimes acted against the interests of project work. NYCS had its own agenda including extensive involvement in county events, for example the Royal Norfolk Show. The summer was a time of local, national and international residential experiences. Activities like these were perceived as beneficial to the young people taking part and politically important for maintaining the high profile which, it was thought, would help to protect the service. The preparation and delivery of events towards this high profile consumed the time and energy of some members of staff and served as diversions from their neighbourhood youth work role. The process of social education at the town youth club is severely disrupted by the devotion to other causes of the full-time youth worker's interest and energy. NYCS had a strong sense of community at the county level but it was sometimes weak at the neighbourhood level.

Youth clubs with paid part-time youth workers were funded to open about 43 weeks of the year. Full-time youth workers were entitled to six or seven weeks' annual leave each year and this was not necessarily taken during closed periods. Staff illness and vacant part-time posts further limited what was possible both in terms of the relationship between young people and particular youth workers and in terms of the diversity and intensity of programme items offered. Engagement with the research project was very much the personal commitment of particular youth workers, rather than a commitment of the youth work agency. Thus when one part-time youth worker left his employment to undertake full-time training for youth work, his project was left to flounder.

The Martham and Stalham project eventually came to a halt when the county centre was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1990. Such an event understandably

disrupts any service but contingency plans for other services are more likely to be both offered and taken up. For example, when a school is destroyed by fire, the education of the students is continued by increasing the number of students and teachers at other schools and by the supply of temporary buildings and students may be unhappy about the arrangements but a combination of forces act to ensure that a majority of them co-operate.

Effective delivery of a public service relies on willingness to support contingency plans by both providers and clients. NYCS was unable to provide a temporary building to replace the (temporary) building which was destroyed. It was often unable to provide staff to replace those who left their employment at short notice or who were absent through illness. Contingency plans were late and poorly supported by NYCS.

This raises a series of questions about the willingness of clients to support contingency plans. In the case of the building destroyed by fire, I feel certain that the membership would have supported another temporary building on the site, but they were unwilling to make use of the next nearest county centres since this solution failed to recognise the young people's sense of territory and ownership and issues of convenience.

Although youth workers appear to work in teams, the workload is personal. That is to say that the particular discussions and projects embarked upon by a youth worker with young people are negotiated between the particular youth worker and the particular young people. The areas of work, for example subjects for discussion or types of project to be undertaken, might in part be the result of an influence beyond the youth work relationship, but teams of youth workers are unusual if the personnel within them can inter-change their workloads. This begins to explain the inability of the Youth Service to adequately fill the gaps created when a member of staff is ill or leaves employment at short notice.

Projects were undertaken where a youth worker treated it as a high priority. Projects failed to be started, to be continued and to be completed (at least within the time scale of the research project which gave about 12 months for the youth work initiatives) where youth workers gave them low priority.

Differences in Emphasis

Each of the 16 projects which reached a recorded conclusion differed from the rest in at least some of the following ways.

Intent

The initiatives mirrored the tension of the three purposes of the project as a whole; production of systematically collected information to guide future delivery; catalyst to the development of youth work practice; access beyond the existing client group. Furthermore, there is a youth work continuum with, at one end, the investigations of experts to further knowledge and craftspersonship and, at the other, participative youth work ventures to further the social education of young people. Each of the projects can be located somewhere between the two extremes.

Research Question

Most youth work units and groups of young people, with varying measures of influence from me, chose their own questions within the big 'needs' question. Many of these related to local concerns about attendance and participation in their own particular youth clubs. Occasionally the question was suggested by me in which case it reflected my desire to follow up on something which had caught my interest in one of the other projects. The group of themes can be dissected in more than one direction: those which asked about involvement in particular youth provision as distinct from those which asked about the lives of young people beyond youth provision; those which explored earlier identified specific issues, like the environment or housing, and

those which began with general questions and allowed specifics, if any, to emerge; those which concentrated on the content of youth work and those which grappled with youth work's process and methods. The questions themselves are not directly comparable.

Research and Youth Work Methods

Here lie two parallel measures. One stretches from the quantitative to the qualitative methods of research. Some projects were much more concerned with one than with the other. The other parallel follows Smith's (1982) paradigm of youth work: telling, selling, participating, spectating. This shorthand for the range of roles the adults in youth work can adopt is useful for placing each project in its youth work frame-work.

Key Characters

The driving forces of each of the projects were any combination of youth worker(s), young person(s) and myself. The dynamics of ownership was an influential variable with particular reference to the questions addressed and the methods of addressing them.

Young People

Young people were the researchers in some of the projects and were, as an exclusive social group, the researched in all but one of them. The groups of researched young people differed systematically in respect of age range, gender balance within groups and extent of current involvement in youth provision.

Achievements

Finally, the projects varied in the extent to which their intentions materialised. Some were strong on either youth work or on research. Others were strong on both.

Furthermore, the projects were different from one another in the balance of achievement with regard to intended and useful but unintended outcomes.

Captured and Caged

The following short descriptions of each of the projects which reached recorded conclusions specify the characteristics identified.

Attleborough Youth Forum

Diane, one of the part-time youth workers at Attleborough Senior Youth Club was in the process of undertaking Basic Youth Leadership (BYL) training for part-time youth work. She attended the Attleborough research project workshop in January 1990. She felt that the concerns of the research project coincided conveniently with her own and felt that finding out about the needs of young people was a personal challenge which she wanted to take on. She was conscious of a group of young people who were meeting regularly outside the youth club and with whom the youth workers had some sort of rapport but who rarely came inside and she wanted to include these young people. She also wanted to review the needs of the young people who were regular participants. Diane's intention was to engage more constructively than before with the young people outside the youth club and to support a young person led curriculum within the youth club.

Diane planned her youth forum to be an evening in which the young people would discuss in groups different aspects of the youth club, for example the activities, the times of operation, the coffee bar. The project would involve all six of the part-time youth workers and the full-time DYCO at the club. Each group of young people would have its own room and youth workers, each with their own topic, would rotate until each group had discussed each of the topics. Youth workers would record the views of the groups for Diane to write up after the event.

The project took a long time to plan because Diane needed to consult with each member of staff and it proved impossible to get them together so this was done individually and she also needed to discuss her plans with her BYL tutor since the project was an element of her training. Diane also became very caught up with the concept of what she called evaluation and spent a good deal of time reading up and discussing it.

Twenty three young people (17 male and 6 female), including the young people from outside the club, took part, one evening in September 1990 along with three youth workers and Diane. One of the groups was unco-operative and the rotation was adjusted to place the full-time youth worker, who Diane perceived as having most expertise and experience, with the most difficult group. This worked in terms of each group being able to discuss the issues but raised another question for Diane about the competence of some of her colleagues in working with less co-operative young people. All of the youth workers, except the full-time youth worker, found it difficult to record systematically what the young people were saying. The process went on for an hour and a half by which time the youth workers were, in Diane's words 'exhausted'.

At this point I discovered that what Diane had been concerned about was not really evaluation but how she would analyse her findings. I showed her how to create a database which would enable her to take into account the impact of different youth workers and different environments on the discussion, since these had become concerns, as well as the contributions of the different groups of young people in respect of the different aspects of the youth club. She never completed the database but provided me, in October 1990, with a written report of the experience and the findings as best she could from the limited recordings of her colleagues.

Belton and Bradwell Youth Matters Survey

This survey was undertaken by Nic, the then newly appointed DYCO for the Belton and Bradwell Division, between January and May 1989, while the centre which was to be his base was being built. The self-completion survey administered by Nic to one class of each year group in three neighbouring high schools was of 600 young people, aged between 12 and 18. It was modelled on two earlier surveys (Watts, 1988; Norfolk CC, NYCS Southern Area, 1989). Some of the young people completed the survey in one lesson of 30 to 35 minutes. Others used two 15 minute registration sessions, one week apart. Nic talked the young people through the questions to try to ensure that they understood what was required.

The survey was concerned with young people's use of free time, with their anxieties and with their engagement with social problems like use of alcohol and other drugs.

Nic contacted me in the autumn of 1989 for help with coding and analysing his responses. It transpired that there were fairly serious design problems with some parts of the survey form. It was furthermore evident that neither Nic's office nor mine could possibly find the time to code 600 responses. At my suggestion, a random sample, stratified by age and by high school, was taken from the completed responses. I drew up a coding schedule to analyse the parts of the survey which still seemed interesting and which had avoided the worst of the design problems. Nic's clerical assistant coded the selected schedules while he was taking annual leave during the summer of 1990 and I analysed them, during the autumn of 1990, providing Nic with a written report in December 1990.

Broadland Community Survey

Justin, appointed as DYCO at Hoveton, Broadland Division, after the start of the research project, attended the last of the research project workshops in February 1990. He told me that Samantha, a member of his Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

and a BTEC Health Studies student would be undertaking, in liaison with Richard, the AYCO, and himself, a study of the youth and community centre.

Samantha's question was 'Is the youth and community centre of Hoveton being used to its full potential or can it be improved?' To answer it, she attended a management committee meeting, researched the history, development and programme of the county centre and carried out two self-complete surveys, one of 204 members of the community, 128 of whom were under the age of 20 and a simpler one of 24 Brownie Guides. The questions she asked were desperately deductive: 'Where do you live?' 'Do you use the youth and community centre?' 'If yes, what for?' 'If not, why not? 'How do you travel there?' 'What activities would you suggest?'

Samantha wrote up her assignment and provided Justin and Richard with sight of it before submission. I was actively prevented from making contact with Samantha until the piece of work was complete.

Costessey Green Project

Catherine, one of the part-time youth workers at Costessey Intermediate Youth Club had already embarked on a project to raise awareness of "green issues" when she came along to a research project workshop. She had been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and capacity to diversify of the members. They were mostly girls aged 11 to 13.. She sought help with pulling the threads of the venture together and with collating the views of her young people around green issues, as a contribution to the research project.

Her description of her progress to date at the workshop brought offers of help from youth workers at another youth club in the division. The project involved young people and their families testing and trying a range of more environmentally friendly products, young people writing for information to a range of commercial and public organisations, young people conducting a survey on awareness and views and using the opportunity to provide information, young people organising a rubbish collection

event, and a youth club application for grant aid for recycling banks. More than 100
young people, mostly girls aged 11 to 13, had been involved at one or more stages of
the project.

The project led, within months, to a public presentation of the work
undertaken by the youth club and a written report requesting changes in practice, in
the youth club, in the Youth Service and in the community. Only one of the girls was
present for the presentation which fell on the evening of St. Valentine's Day, and few
of the invited dignitaries came along.

Costessey School Foyer Survey

Gordon, the DYCO, decided to use the stimulus provided at the workshop he
attended in January 1990, to make contact with some young people who were not
regular members of the youth club. He stood in the foyer of the nearby high school at
two lunch-times in January 1990 and asked any young people he saw if they were
willing to be interviewed. He completed 25 short structured interviews with 8 young
men and 17 young women, aged 11 to 16 years. On his third visit, he was
overwhelmed by young people wanting to know what was going on so he conducted a
group discussion of 16 young people aged 12 to 15.

He wanted to find out what sort of activities the young people were interested
in, what were the best days and times for them to take place and to find out if there
was anything preventing young people from using the youth centre.

Gordon conducted a simple analysis, laid plans to make small adjustments to
practice at the centre, wrote a short report of the project and sent me a copy in
February 1990.

Diss Sociogram Survey

After the earlier false start at Diss, it was agreed with Arnie, the DYCO, that if I could design a project, the staff would provide me with access to the youth club members and would informally encourage the members to take part. I wanted to make use of the hypothesis of the first group of young people at Diss, that participation is as much about the other people taking part as about what is offered. I was, by this time, May 1990, becoming committed to the idea of concluding all of the youth work initiatives as quickly as possible so I was limiting my personal involvement with young people to no more than two contact sessions per group and this restricted my options.

I decided to conduct short individual structured interviews with each young person who was willing around the following themes: what they thought of the youth club; why they came to the youth club; which of several roles did youth club members and youth workers play in their lives. I conducted 29 interviews on two evenings with young people divided equally by gender and aged 12 to 17. The young people's views were recorded in a written report including a sociogram demonstrating three networks for different functions within and beyond the youth club.

I arranged a follow up meeting with Arnie who said, unprompted, that the report would be useful as a starting point for staff development.

Downham Market Summer Project Survey

Jenny, the DYCO brought a car load of volunteers and older members to the workshop at Hunstanton. Her position in relation to the research project was one based on curiously conflicting principles. She was supportive of me, the youth worker, as she felt she ought to be to colleagues and this is perhaps why she came to the workshop. She felt that her workload was already full and so she could not take on any additional pieces of work. She felt that finding out about the needs of young people was her every-day business and while she would provide me with access to the young people in her division, she was unwilling to do anything additional herself.

She showed me some of the work she was already engaged in, which had encouraged young people taking part in a group-work programme to evaluate their experience of the programme. I wanted her to extend this to a more general youth work setting and to write up the outcomes. She refused but said that if I designed something and agreed to write it up, she would arrange for young people to administer it to their peers.

I subsequently designed an interviewer-administered survey of 24 young people, aged 13 to 21, most of whom were female. It was concerned, using semantic differential scales, with how young people felt about themselves and how youth workers should be. It was carried out during the Downham Market summer project in 1990, but it lacked the intimacy which reference to particular experiences would have provided and which could have been included if Jenny had been willing. I supplied Jenny with a written report of the findings. I later found out that Jenny seriously lacked confidence about her own literacy skills and this may explain some of her earlier reluctance to take a lead.

Young Women and Housing in Great Yarmouth

Karen, the full-time youth worker employed by the Girls Friendly Society at the Great Yarmouth Young Women's Project, observed, early on in her appointment in 1989, that there were a number of young women with their own children in Great Yarmouth and that they were experiencing difficulty in meeting their housing needs. She presented her observations to her management committee with her proposal that the project look at providing accommodation for young women and their babies. The members of the committee were surprised by Karen's observation and requested that she undertake a feasibility study before embarking on this new area of work. She contacted me for help.

It seemed to me that what the committee wanted to know was whether young women in this situation were sufficiently common for such a venture to be necessary,

what it would cost to provide the service, where the funds could be found and what the management and practice problems were likely to be. This established, Karen felt confident about supplying her committee with the information. I thought it would be interesting to find out about the experiences of the young women with whom she was in contact and we planned a project to record them.

Two of the young women helped us to decide what questions to ask. The questions started off with those about housing but covered personal history, finance and relationships as well. The young women were aged 15 to 22 at the time of the project, but 14 to 17 at the birth of their (first) babies.

I interviewed one of the young women, tape recording the interview, then she interviewed another, so the chain was set in motion. Karen and one or two of the young women stepped in whenever the chain was in danger of breaking. Most of the eight young women contacted were interviewed twice, filling the gaps and following up interesting themes in the second interview. The tapes were transcribed by my clerical assistant. The original two young women helped to "cut and paste" the transcripts, and I wrote each of the young women's stories. Karen and the young women were going to help with this but Karen could never find time and sessions with the young women (both mine and Karen's) were constantly disrupted by the domestic and personal crises of the young women, some of whom were in dire straits. When the young women were individually satisfied with their stories I wrote a thematic analysis of the lives and situations of the young women.

Hellesdon Video Project

From the point of view of the research project, video was a vehicle for the expression of young people's feelings and aspirations. For Mike, the part-time youth worker who undertook this project with young people at Hellesdon County Youth Centre, it was a means of enabling young people to acquire knowledge, a practical skill, political skill and self-confidence.

At the outset of the project, the particular young people were disenchanted with the youth club; the management committee had changed the method of collecting in subscriptions; the young people's anger had manifested itself in disruptive behaviour. The youth worker felt that the young people's anger might serve as the catalyst to their involvement in this project which, if they wished, could enable their voices to be heard.

The project began with a series of eight sessions aimed at the young people acquiring some degree of familiarity with themselves as actors, with use and care of the equipment and some technical expertise which the youth worker was able to pass on. I took part in two of these early sessions, both of which were disrupted because of technical equipment failure, and I observed some of the rehearsals for the video proper. The story line decided on by the young people, four young women aged 15, and youth worker was 'the past, present and future - our needs then, now and in five years' time'. Although recorded, the video was never edited because access to the resource to do this was difficult and the interest of the youth worker was lost before it was achieved.

Mid-project and because of the demands of the project, a review of staffing was undertaken at the youth club. The other tangible outcome was a fairly comprehensive report of the process written by Mike.

Hellesdon Unattached Group

The context in which this contribution was created was my desire to look at ways in which the research project, through youth workers, could reach out to young people not, at the time, involved in organised youth provision. In a sense, this was a pilot for a stage of the project which never materialised.

I approached Justina, a 17 year old young woman, who was working as a clerical assistant in the Education Department at County Hall. I established first that she was not involved in any youth provision, although she had been when she was younger. I explained to her that I wanted to find out whether there was anything that

the Youth Service could do for young people in the priority age range but outside the Service. She agreed to ask a few of her friends if they would be willing to talk to me and she subsequently arranged for me to meet them at her home in April 1990.

We talked for an hour and a half or so and I steered the conversation through the young women's previous experience of youth work, their impressions of it, their current lives and desires and the gaps which they felt they had been unable to fill. I wrote up my notes of the conversation and gave each of the five young women in the group a copy so that they could check for accuracy and make any amendments they wanted to. They all returned the copies without any changes.

Hethersett Group Discussion and Survey

Hethersett Youth Club, on the outskirts of Norwich, was a voluntary youth club, meeting in the village hall, catering for a wide (5 to 15 years) age range, run by three adult volunteers. Colin, one of the volunteers, came to a research project workshop in January 1990. None of the volunteers had received any youth work training but Colin had tried to engage with the statutory Youth Service on many previous occasions and he wanted to try to develop participatory youth work at the club. He felt that finding out about what young people wanted was a part of the process of getting the youth club members to direct more of the club's activities.

He set about trying to get a group of the members to take part in planning the spring term's programme of activities. This produced a list of things the members said they wanted to do. He agreed to organise about 75% of the activities on the list, but every three or four weeks in the programme was an item to be organised by a group of the young people. Throughout the period between January and Easter 1990, Colin and I stayed in telephone contact. None of the items to be organised by the young people took place. Colin told me that the plans repeatedly fell apart after disagreements between the young people and himself over other youth club matters, like the cost of

subs. and the young people's behaviour. He invited me to the youth club to talk to the young people.

The subsequent group interview with six (four boys, two girls) 13 and 14 year olds who were at the heart of both the youth club and the disagreements took place on 24th April 1990. The young people were willing to talk to me only on condition that I not share their feelings with Colin or the other adult volunteers. I made notes of our discussion and arranged with Colin a date three weeks later when I could return to the club to share the notes with the young people. The date was cancelled by the youth club. (The date of another item in the programme had been changed.) The visit was re-arranged but by this time, 3rd July 1990, the summer had come, the membership in attendance was limited to ten or a dozen under tens. None of the original group was present.

I left Colin with a self-complete survey he could use with members of the youth club over the summer and he sent me 12 completed responses in September 1990. I supplied him with a written report of the process and the findings of the survey but the notes of the group discussion remained confidential.

King's Lynn Group Discussion

In liaison with Peter, the DYCO at King's Lynn, I arranged a research project workshop, one of the first of the workshops, in November 1989, to cater for a group of the King's Lynn staff and senior members and two members of staff from neighbouring youth clubs. When I arrived, there was one part-time youth worker from King's Lynn, Karen, and she was unable to devote herself wholly to the research project for the evening since she had other responsibilities in the club, the DYCO from Swaffham, the AYCO for West Norfolk who said he was there to observe only, and six youth club members. Thinking on my feet, in consultation with the two youth workers and the youth officer present, we agreed to cancel the workshop but that I

would conduct a group interview with the young people, since they were there and willing to take part.

I was not, unfortunately, prepared for this piece of work so I asked the questions which occurred to me at the time. There were four girls aged 13 to 15 years, a boy of ten and a young man of 18. They were all active members of the King's Lynn youth club. The discussion covered the activities and facilities which ought to be offered by the youth club, the young people's best experiences of the youth club, the young people's need for information and/or and the injustices they experienced within and beyond the youth club.

I wrote up the notes of the discussion and sent them, within a few days, to Karen for her to check back with the young people. She telephoned me to say that the young people thought they were accurate and they were happy with them.

King's Lynn Outreach Survey

A part of Karen's work was outreach work in the town. Creating access to young people outside youth clubs was consequently on her agenda as well as on mine. In April 1990 Karen identified a group of young people with whom she was already working and secured their interest in finding out about the views of young people outside the youth club.

The group drafted some questions to ask of young people they knew but who never came to the youth club. Karen phoned me with the questions and I helped to phrase them so that analysis would be fairly straightforward. The young people discussed the options and decided to use a self-complete style but to observe the questionnaires being completed to prevent them from becoming paper aeroplanes! The questionnaire was piloted in June and the group found that no amendments were necessary.

The group waited till September to undertake the survey proper and they secured 29 responses during the month. The young people were free to ask anyone

they chose. Help with explaining to teachers and YT supervisors was offered but not taken up. Unfortunately 10 of the respondents had omitted to complete the first page of the questionnaire, providing information about age, gender and the home area of the respondent. The age range of the remainder was 14 to 17 years and the group was approximately two thirds female.

The completed questionnaires were sent to me. I analysed them, wrote a report and provided the group with a copy around Christmas-time 1990.

Loddon Back Room Club Survey

A short interviewer-administered survey was designed, implemented and analysed by the youth workers at Loddon and Chedgrave County Youth and Community Centre. It looked at young people's reasons for coming to the youth club, the activities they enjoyed and their understanding of the structure of the youth and NYCS. Responses were from 27 young people, 11 male and 16 female, aged 12 to 15 years.

Critical Incidents at Shrublands

The initial concern of the staff team at Shrublands County Youth Centre, the 'House Project' as the youth club had recently been re-named by the members, was how to attract a larger membership of young people in the NYCS priority age range. Their early considerations were about image, the kind of image projected, the kind of image perceived by young people and how to convey a more attractive image. We were unable to find a way of investigating the question without making huge leaps from data to interpretation. We consequently decided on attempting to find out from young people who were active members of the youth club what they perceived as the benefits of their involvement and which aspects of the process they felt had been instrumental.

A list of starter phrases, reflecting the youth work intentions detailed in the NYCS curriculum working paper, were drawn up in consultation with youth workers but it was agreed that I should conduct the interviews so that young people would not be constrained by their relationships with their youth workers. In the summer of 1990, I interviewed individually the twelve young people who agreed to participate asking each one to use one of the starter phrases to tell me about a time at the youth club. The interviews varied in length, from 15 to 45 minutes and involved my spending three evenings at the youth club. I prompted to clarify details and to exact the sort of information we were looking for. I wrote brief notes during the interviews and wrote them up in more detail immediately afterwards. The young people were assured confidentiality, so they chose new names and descriptions for themselves.

Geoff, the full-time youth worker worked with me on conducting an analysis of the records of my interviews and the contents of young people's stories were grouped under two headings: the benefits of involvement and the roles of the youth workers.

The short but illuminating report was discussed by the staff team and served to endorse the practices perceived as most positive by the young people. Many of these had previously been understood as mere by-products of the organisation of specific activities and the development of facilities. The outcomes further served to strengthen the team's resolve to perpetuate their style of working; prior to this they had felt it was right while lacking confidence in it.

Taverham Collage

Two part-time youth workers, Alex and Marilyn attended the Costessey research project workshop and went back to their youth club committed to making a collage with youth club members with a theme of what they wanted from life. They supplied a wide variety of printed material for the young people to cut and paste but the young people were also encouraged to draw and write on the collage. The activity was 'frenzied', with 12 to 15, 14 and 15 year olds taking part, and the youth workers

noted differences in the concerns and the approaches of the boys and the girls. They subsequently divided into single gender groups and discussed the issues raised in the collage.

The youth workers allowed me to photograph the collage and provided me with the flip-chart sheets they had used to record the main points raised in discussion. Marilyn also discussed her "findings" with me at length.

Comparisons

There are many dimensions for the comparison of the concluded youth work initiatives. The first figure charts the range of questions addressed, the role identity of the key characters in each, the number of young people involved, their age range and the gender balance.

The second and third figures attempt to map the research intentions and achievements of each of the projects. The research intentions reflect the three broad intentions of the research project as a whole: academic - the collection of material from which it is possible to infer something about young people in a youth work framework, about youth work content or process; access - making contact with young people beyond the existing youth work client group; action - influencing the understanding of local youth work practitioners of their craft, making an in-put to youth work unit ethos and either providing the stimulus to change or consolidate practice. The access category is never entirely freestanding. It is always related either to one of the other research categories or to youth work intentions and achievements.

I have employed Smith's paradigm of youth work - telling, selling, participating and spectating (1982) - to classify the youth work intentions and achievements.

The charts are useful for visualising the diversity and for summing what amounts to approximately six months' work. They fall short, however, of examining the extent to which each of the initiatives was concerned with each of the research and

youth work options. They simply demonstrate a discernible presence, no matter how small.

Furthermore the charts are necessarily incomplete. The research project, as a piece of contract research, was subject to a strict finishing point, beyond which it was impossible to receive any more information relating to it. This part of the project - the one which was most likely to have action outcomes - was cut short, sacrificed in favour of the survey through young people. An effective sacrifice required its own finishing date which was set for the end of October 1990, six months before the end of the research project. There were four locations, Attleborough, Belton and Bradwell, King's Lynn (outreach) and Taverham, where action seemed likely as a result of either the findings or the process of the project, but where it had not occurred by the end of October 1990. In the case of the first three, the projects were written up after the finishing date so no further enquiries took place. At Taverham, the youth workers were unprepared for what they found out about the young people they were working with. So, they were taking a little time to collect their thoughts and to decide whether or not and, if so, how best to address the issues.

The final figure is a simple classification of broad approaches.

4.1 Comparison of questions, key characters and respondents

Project	Question(s)	Key Characters	Respondents Ages	Number of Male	Female
Attleborough Youth Forum	What do young people want from the youth club?	Part-time trainee youth worker	14-19	17	6
Belton and Bradwell Youth Matters Survey	What are the concerns and and interests of young people?	DYCO and Researcher	12-17	38	36
Broadland Community Survey	Is the youth and community centre of Hoveton being used to its full potential or can it be improved?	Young person	6 -60+	80	148
Costessey Green Project	How do young people feel about environmental issues?	Part-time youth workers	11-13	20	80
Costessey School Foyer Survey	What are young people's interests? When do they want activities provided? What, if anything, prevents them from using the youth club?	DYCO	11-16	8	17
Diss Sociogram Survey	What do young people think of the youth club? Why do they come? What, of several purposes, do youth club members and workers serve in their lives?	Researcher	12-17	15	14
Downham Market Summer Project Survey	How do young people feel about themselves and how youth workers ought to be?	Researcher, DYCO and young people	13-21	4	20
Young Women and Housing in Great Yarmouth	What are the lives of young mothers in Great Yarmouth like, with special reference to their housing?	Researcher, full-time youth worker and young women	15-22		8

Project	Question(s)	Key Characters	Respondents Ages	Number of Male	Female
Hellesdon Video Project	What are the changing needs of young people?	Part-time youth worker	14-15		4
Hellesdon Unattached Group	What do young people want from the Youth Service?	Researcher	17-19		5
Hethersett Group Discussion and Survey	What do young people want from the youth club and how can their participation be secured?	Part-time youth worker and Researcher	11-15	12	6
King's Lynn Group Discussion	What do young people want from the youth club? What are their best youth club experiences?	Researcher	10-18	2	4
King's Lynn Outreach Survey	What do young people outside the youth club, think of the youth club?	Part-time youth worker, researcher and young people	14-17	10	19
Loddon Back Room Club Survey	What are young people's reasons for coming to the youth club? What do they enjoy? What is their understanding of the organisation?	DYCO and part-time youth workers	12-15	11	16
Critical Incidents at Shrublands	What are the benefits of involvement in youth work? Which processes are instrumental?	Researcher and DYCO	14-17	6	6
Taverham Collage	What do young people want from life?	Part-time youth workers	14-15	7	7

4.1   Comparison of questions, key characters and respondents (continued)

4.2   Comparison of research and youth work intent

Project	Research			Youth Work			
	Data	Access More Young People	Action on Policy or Practice	Telling	Selling	Partici-pating	Spectating
Attleborough	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Belton and Bradwell	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Broadland	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Costessey	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Costessey Outreach	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Diss	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Downham Market	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Gt. Yarmouth	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hellesdon	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hellesdon Unattached	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Hethersett	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
King's Lynn	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
King's Lynn Outreach	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Loddon	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Shrublands	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Taverham	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

4.3	Comparison of research and youth work achievement						
Project	Research			Youth Work			
	Data	Access More Young People	Action on Policy or Practice	Telling	Selling	Partici-pating	Spectating
Attleborough	Yes	Yes	?	No	Yes	Yes	No
Belton and Bradwell	Yes	Yes	?	No	No	No	No
Broadland	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Costessey	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Costessey Outreach	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Diss	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Downham Market	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Gt. Yarmouth	Yes	No	?	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hellesdon	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Hellesdon Unattached	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Hethersett	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
King's Lynn	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
King's Lynn Outreach	Yes	Yes	?	No	Yes	Yes	No
Loddon	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Shrublands	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Taverham	Yes	No	?	No	Yes	Yes	No

4.4 Comparison of research approaches			
Project	Quantitaive	Qualitative	Secondary Sources
Attleborough Youth Forum	No	Yes	No
Belton and Bradwell Youth Matters Survey	Yes	No	No
Broadland Community Survey	Yes	No	Yes
Costessey Green Project	Yes	Yes	Yes
Costessey School Foyer Survey	Yes	Yes	No
Diss Sociogram Survey	Yes	Yes	No
Downham Market Summer Project	Yes	No	No
Young Women and Housing in Great Yarmouth	No	Yes	No
Hellesdon Video Project	No	Yes	No
Hellesdon Unattached Group	No	Yes	No
Hethersett Group Discussion and Survey	Yes	Yes	No
King's Lynn Group Discussion	No	Yes	No
King's Lynn Outreach Survey	Yes	No	No
Loddon Back Room Club Survey	Yes	No	No
Critical Incidents at Shrublands	No	Yes	No
Taverham Collage	No	Yes	No

All of the youth work initiatives produced something about young people or youth work on which it was possible to report, even those which did not include this as a primary objective. This is clearly the most tangible of the potential outcomes, the one which it is easiest to say with some certainty that it is present or not, but this was not the sole criteria for inclusion in this category of concluded projects. There were one or two projects, for example the Costessey Green Project, which were much more

about participative youth work and could have been included in this category on these grounds alone.

That each of these projects says something could readily be attributed to my persistence in finding something useful within them and to the phenomena that none of the projects failed through lack of a report where one was appropriate. For this was a role, recorder and report writer, that was frequently mine.

Many of the projects achieved something in more of the categories than was intended at the outset. There were two projects which produced academic material in this way. The Costessey Green Project said something about how informed young people feel about their environment. The attempts to engage with young people at Hethersett Youth Club produced interesting suggestions, later followed up, about the relationship between youth worker and young people. This material is additional to the findings of those projects which intended academic material as one of the outcomes.

Three projects which concluded achieved rather less than intended. At Loddon, the survey failed to find out anything which the youth workers felt they did not already knew. Both Broadland and Hethersett failed most notably in youth work terms. The youth worker at Broadland became a spectator to the activities of the young women conducting the enquiry, so her efforts were expended for not very useful outcomes and her personal learning experience was neither as interesting nor as challenging as it should have been. Power here was not shared. Almost all of it lay with the young woman but she had not been enabled to use it wisely.

The youth worker at Hethersett was unable to communicate to the young people, his care for young people, in the way that he was able to do so to me. His desire to get young people involved more fully was genuine but he was unaware of the holistic nature of the youth work relationship. Sharing power permeates all aspects of the relationship or none: he was trying to get young people to take responsibility for decision-making around the club programme and to take responsibility for organising activities of one sort or another, but the youth workers were setting, without

consultation, all of the rules about attendance and behaviour at the youth club. So, what was intended to be selling an idea to young people to win their participation wound up as selling an idea to tell them what to do. I was unable even to share with him the content of the young people's contributions because they had insisted that I keep them to myself.

I have sought a relationship between the role identity of the key characters and the nature of the questions asked, between the research and the youth work intentions and between achievements and the methods used. I have found none. However, action was achieved only where there was a significant involvement of youth workers. It was possible for me, as researcher to collect data from young people and to inform young people of the outcomes. The business of using the material to inform practice required the in-put of the local youth worker to internalise and share the information with colleagues and/or to enable the young people to act.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The first group of findings follows the thinking of the many practitioners who were trying to establish the purpose and functions of youth work and the Youth Service, from young people's needs. This question, about young people's needs, was central to the concerns of the Norfolk Youth and Community Service. It was said to me, with some cynicism, by one of the DYCOs, 'NYCS doesn't stand for Norfolk Youth and Community Service. It stands for Norfolk Youth Clubs Service!' It was true that the mainstay of the Service was the direct provision of staff and plant at 33 (growing to 35 by the conclusion of the research project) locations in the county and that it also offered support to the many voluntary youth clubs and other organisations in the county. This had been its post-Albemarle strategy and one to which it had stuck almost without deviation. Different ways of working were gradually being introduced into the Service by new employees. Observations of young people at risk and in trouble in the city were being made. Neither sight of rural poverty nor the popular "immediate needs met" image of young people in Norfolk had been lost.

A serious problem which began here with this question and pervaded the entire research project was the same one which has dogged many of the practitioner initiatives to explore young people's preferences. Most of the young people and youth workers in Norfolk knew no kind of youth work other than that which they had experienced in Norfolk, so they were never to be in a position to compare, from the benefit of experience, the merits or demerits of one function or style against the rest. Their views had to be sought in a less direct manner. It was necessary to find out their impressions of young people's needs, concerns and aspirations and about their experiences in youth work and other arenas in their lives, and to group and to interpret this material in order that youth work could learn from it. There is, of course, an

inherent danger in this process and the questions of whose interpretation and for what ends are legitimate.

The findings from the Norfolk research project are here grouped according to their source: the survey of youth workers' views, the youth work initiatives and the survey through young people. Then they are re-grouped to see what sense they make in relation to the sorts of functions which the Service might have.

Youth Workers' Views

The literature available at the outset of the Norfolk research project had not suggested a frame-work which I preferred to the one I had developed and employed as a practitioner (figure 5.1). In this model, young people are viewed as a community in their own right, reflecting my understanding that there is something exclusive about being a young person. They are also members of other communities, which might be concerned with neighbourhood or with other interests. All communities, those comprised of young people, of adults and of both exist within society. Young people's needs are shaped by this combination of influences. Although, as a practitioner, I was unaware of it, this part of it is not unlike the Coffield et al (1986) model, refined by Kealy (1988).

I employed a very simplistic classification of needs: those which belong to almost everyone, "the general" and those which belong to sub-groups and relate either to the particular situation of the group's members or to their particular interests, "the specific".Young people's concerns were one influence on the sort of intervention my work might make, but another related to the philosophical backdrop of the agency of which I was employee and representative and another still related to what I perceived the boundaries of youth work to be. The selection was then made by balancing the three influences.

5.1 My practitioner frame-work

the philosophical backdrop
EQUALITY & PEACE

the functions of youth work
FACILITATE   EDUCATE   EMPOWER
PARTICIPATION

examples of appropriate provision

YOUTH CLUBS

INTEREST-BASED CLUBS,
GROUPS & PROJECTS

FORUMS, CAMPAIGNS

GENERAL to meet, make friends
NEEDS   & partners, to value self,
to learn

INTERESTS
e.g. sports, arts

SPECIFIC
NEEDS

SITUATIONAL
e.g. gender, race
or unemployment, young
parenthood, juvenile crime

SOCIETY

YOUNG PEOPLE

COMMUNITIES

There is inter-change between styles of provision. For example, the members of the girls' group, whose function might be to expose and challenge oppression, might subsequently become members of the canoe club, whose objectives might be to facilitate the development of practical skill, responsibility and confidence. What is important is that the situation of girls and young women who make that transition, never be assumed to be the same as, say a young man who came along because he was interested in canoeing.

As part of the postal census into the views of people working with young people about the young people with whom they were working, the tasks performed by the youth clubs and groups that they were working with and of NYCS, youth workers were asked directly about the concerns of young people. The first question in this group was open-ended. Workers were asked, without prompting, to write down the most important concerns facing the majority of young people with whom they were in contact. Some workers gave only one answer while others gave two or three.

5.2 Youth workers' views on the
most important concerns facing young people

Respondents who mentioned the item
%

Work and employment	38
Social and recreational activities	27
Unemployment	25
Money	20
Relationships with friends	19
School	18
Relationships (general)	17
Sexual relationships	16
Responsibilities	14
Parents	10
Self-image	8
Drugs	7
AIDS	7
Sexuality	6
Alcohol	6
Direction in life	5
Trouble with the law	3

'Work' and 'unemployment' categories include concerns for
the future as well as for the present.

These individual categories of response can be grouped:

Occupation and Leisure	- work - social and recreational activities - unemployment - school
Money	- money
Relationships	- relationships with friends - relationships in general - sexual relationships - relationships with parents
Responsibility	- responsibility
Personal Identity	- self image - sexuality
Social Problems	- drugs - AIDS - alcohol - trouble with the law

This grouping is only partly satisfactory in that it fails to find a group home for 'money' and for 'responsibility' and it classes 'school' as an occupation rather than as education in its own right.

It helps to illustrate that the perspective of most youth workers was to see as most important the every day concerns affecting almost everyone, or stereotypical youth at least. If the responses had been coded differently, if all of the relationships concerns had been put into the same category rather than being divided between four, then the number of youth workers recording 'relationships' would have surpassed those who recorded occupation. Fewest youth workers called most important the social problems or the other concerns which are sometimes conveniently attributed to personal pathology.

The survey also asked youth workers, when presented with eight potential concerns of young people, to say whether they felt they were relevant to a majority or to a minority of the young people. The eight concerns were selected to reflect some of

the more common functions of youth work, those which have been presented as being appropriate to all young people: meeting, activities, projects and community involvement. These reflect the "general needs" of my practitioner frame-work.

5.3 Youth workers' views on concerns as relevant to a majority and minority of young people		
	Respondents saying	
	'Majority' %	'Minority' %
Meeting friends	92	5
Belonging to a club	72	20
Sports and leisure	68	25
Meeting friendly adults	40	47
Project work	26	54
Managing own activities	25	56
Arts and music	22	58
Contributing to the community	18	60

These issues, divided according to whether more or less than half of the youth workers said they were relevant to a majority of the young people, create the following dichotomy.

Relevant to a majority
- meeting friends
- belonging to a group or club
- sports and leisure activities

Relevant to a minority
- meeting friendly adults
- project work
- managing own activities
- arts and music activities
- contributing to the community

Meeting friends, belonging to a club, sports and leisure activities were perceived by more than half of the youth workers to be relevant to a majority of the young people. By contrast, meeting adults, project work, self-management, cultural activities and community involvement were thought by more than half of the youth workers to be relevant to a minority of the young people. This outcome is a little surprising given that all of the items fit comfortably into the "experience and participation" curriculum

of the post-Thompson period. Certainly it represents a contrast with my practitioner frame-work. Youth workers seem to be saying that 'general needs' are a much smaller group than those I suggested.

Youth workers were similarly presented with a list of 20 "problem issues", reflecting the "specific needs" of my practitioner frame-work, and they were asked to say whether they felt these were directly affecting a majority or a minority of their young people.

5.4 Youth workers views' on "problem issues" as relevant to a majority and minority of young people		
	Respondents saying	
	'Majority' %	'Minority' %
Boredom	67	27
Tobacco, alcohol and drugs	31	42
Difficult adolescence	30	44
Transport or isolation	28	37
Getting and keeping a job	27	44
Sex and sexuality	26	41
School/college work	26	58
Unemployment	22	44
Problems at home	20	64
Unequal opportunities	17	43
Gambling/machine addiction	15	44
Trouble at school	14	67
Peer relationships	13	62
Debt or financial hardship	12	46
Sexually transmitted diseases	11	38
Spiritual development	9	44
Accommodation	8	45
Trouble with the law	5	62
Early parenthood	5	46
Sexual abuse	4	45

Problem for a majority   - boredom

Problems for a minority   - trouble at school
                             - problems at home
                             - peer relationships
                             - trouble with the law
                             - school/college work

Boredom in leisure time was the only one of these that was felt to directly affect a majority of the young people by a majority of youth workers. This is one that the Norfolk workers were saying should be added to the group of 'general needs'. Problems at school or college, at home, in peer relationships and trouble with the law were widely thought to directly affect a minority of young people.

Norfolk was the home of much rhetoric amongst youth workers, concerned with the rural nature of the county. Youth workers perceived, through their informal studies of young people and the communities in which they were working, differences between the needs of young people in the City of Norwich itself or the other urban areas of Thetford and King's Lynn and young people in the market towns, the villages and the farms dotted around the huge expanse of countryside. There was an informal understanding that cutting across this classification were the needs of young people in the coastal "holiday" strip of Norfolk, including Great Yarmouth.

To investigate more systematically these perceptions, the responses were divided into the administrative divisions in which the respondents' youth clubs and groups were located. The divisions were classified: urban and suburban; coastal; rural with market towns. The largest group was rural with 40% whilst coastal and urban groups had around 30% each.

5.5   Geographical classification of respondents

Urban / suburban (31%)

Coastal (29%)

Rural / market town (40%)
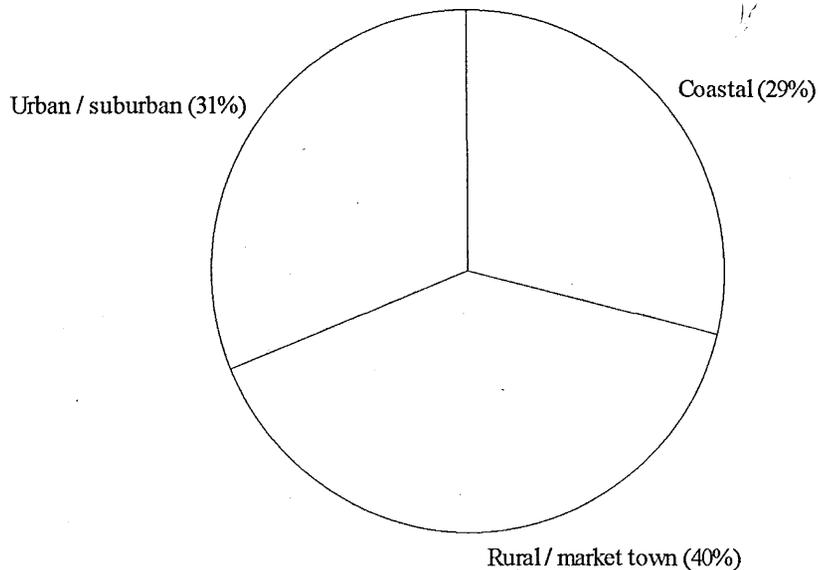
In most cases, there were no differences in the perceived concerns and problems of young people, but the type of area did prove significant in just six, of 45, respects.

5.6   Perceived concerns by geographical classification (chi-squared test)

	Urban %	Coastal %	Rural %	Significance Level
Difficulty with school or college work	41	32	27	.0286
Sports and leisure activities	32	23	45	.0306
Contributing to the community	21	26	54	.0318
Social/recreational activities	18	36	46	.0245
Transport/geographical isolation	12	32	56	.0004

A slightly different classification of type of locality - rural, semi-rural and urban - adds another issue which is dependent on locality.

5.7 Perceived concerns by type of locality (chi-squared test)				
	Urban %	Semi-rural %	Rural %	Significance Level
Getting and keeping a job	42	38	20	.0182

In rural areas, there was much more concern about sports, leisure and social activities, transport or isolation, about contributing to the community and about work. Workers in urban areas put difficulties at school at the top of their list. In five of these concerns, all those except sports and leisure activities, urban and rural locations are at opposite ends of the scale with the coastal belt (inevitably a mixture of urban and rural communities) or semi-rural areas in between. In the case of sports and leisure activities, there was least concern in the coastal strip presumably because of the tourist entertainment and facilities available there and most concern in the rural group of divisions with the urban group in between. So, while there is little evidence to suggest that rural young people are in any way different from urban young people, they are clearly, in the views of youth workers, affected by the social and economic infrastructure which is different in different types of locality. This seems likely to influence young people's sense of self and culture, as suggested by MacDonald (1991) and to suggest different forms of provision in different types of location and to support the idea that rural youth work demands particular approaches (Fabes and Banks, 1991).

The Youth Work Initiatives

Thirteen of the projects undertaken by a combination of young people, youth workers and researcher have 'findings' from which it is possible to say something about the needs of young people. Although the outcomes of this phase of the research project are grouped together, the investigations were not attempted as part of a whole. Each one was a freestanding piece of work.

Attleborough Youth Forum

The young people at Attleborough sought companionship, challenges, the
opportunity for artistic expression but most of all they wanted more of the same. They
wanted the youth club to be open every night of the week.

Belton and Bradwell Youth Matters Survey

The young people were asked, as part of this survey, how often they made use
of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. As is to be expected in a survey administered in
the school classroom, little was revealed about the use of illegal drugs and only 8%
reported that they were smoking cigarettes daily. Rather more young people said they
were drinking alcohol, about a third of them at least monthly and about a fifth at least
weekly.

The young people were also asked which of a list of items worried them.

5.8 Belton and Bradwell young people's worries		
	Young People saying 'Yes'	
	No.	% of Sample
School/exams	60	82
Future job/career prospects	43	59
Your appearance	37	51
Boy/girlfriends	33	45
Being over/under weight	32	44
Money	32	44
AIDS	31	42
Arguments with parents	28	38
Trouble with the law	23	32
Being lonely	20	27
Nuclear weapons	17	23
Pregnancy	17	23
Drugs	14	19
Illness	13	18
The third world	9	12

School and jobs come at the top of the list, with more young people worried than not worried. Appearance too worried more than half. Boy/girlfriends, weight, money, AIDS and arguments with parents worried more than a third of the group.

This rank order is a very limited way of looking at such a "mixed bag" of potential anxieties for young people. I call it a mixed bag because some of the concerns listed are immediate and commonplace and it is likely that the young people are directly affected by them whereas others are more distant and understanding them requires a more sophisticated level of intellectual development. Pregnancy scored a mere 23%, under a quarter of its potential, but it was a worry for 44% of the girls, for a third of those aged 12 and 13 and for half of those age 14 to 18. Those most likely, because of their age and gender, to be directly affected were most likely to be worried. This begs the question about to what extent the other "lesser" anxieties were recorded by those most likely to be directly affected or involved in some way.

Young people were asked to tick boxes next to a list of educational, social and recreational activities to indicate whether they were already engaging in it, would like to engage in it (more) and their reasons for not doing so, if appropriate.

5.9   How Belton and Bradwell young people were spending their time

	Young People saying 'Yes'	
	No.	% of Sample
Watching T.V.	74	100
Watching videos	66	89
(Window) shopping	52	70
At the sea front	51	69
Playing music	49	66
Swimming	44	60
Team sports	41	55
Going to discos	40	54
Cycling	38	52
At the cafe	33	45
At the arcades	33	45
Snooker	30	41
At the pub	26	35
Dance	25	34
Live music	23	31
Skating	21	28
Sports centre	16	21
Uniformed group	14	19
Camping	11	15
Youth club	9	12
Martial arts	7	10
Drama	6	8
Sailing	5	6
Canoeing	4	5
Hobby	3	4

5.10 The activities in which Belton and Bradwell young people
were 'not interested'

	No. of Responses	% of Response
Uniformed group	52	75
Hobby	48	73
Drama	51	71
Dance	53	60
Youth club	48	60
Martial arts	59	59
Skating	57	49
Sailing	58	45
Canoeing	58	43
Cafe	49	39
Camping	55	38
Arcade	52	33
Pub	55	31
Cycling	56	30
Snooker	56	30
Sports centre	57	28
Team sports	49	27
(Window) shopping	61	25
Playing music	65	22
Live music	65	18
Swimming	65	14
Discos	65	10
Sea front	59	7
Videos	54	6
T.V.	69	0

N.B. This was one place in the questionnaire where the design was
complicated. Some young people consequently missed out some of the
items. The first column is the number of young people who answered the
question. The second is the percentage saying 'not interested' of all those
who answered.

5.11   The activities which Belton and Bradwell young
        people wanted to do (more of)

	No. of Responses	% of Response
Live music	56	63
Sports centre	57	60
Camping	55	60
Canoeing	58	54
Sailing	58	51
Pub	55	48
Discos	65	47
Snooker	56	43
Swimming	65	41
Skating	57	37
Martial arts	59	34
Cycling	56	34
Team sports	49	32
Arcades	52	31
Youth club	48	29
Sea front	59	29
Drama	51	26
Hobby	48	23
Videos	54	23
Cafe	49	20
Playing music	65	18
Uniformed group	52	12
(Window) shopping	61	10
T.V.	69	9
Dance	53	8

N.B. This was one place in the questionnaire where the design was complicated. Some young people consequently missed out some of the items. The first column is the number of young people who answered the question. The second is the percentage saying 'yes' of all those who answered.

More young people were spending their leisure time in activities which require little commitment and little organisation. All of the activities in which more than 60% were engaged in are activities, often thought to be passive, although Willis (1990a; 1990b) found that young people's cultural activities are far from passive. Young people's analysis and commentary render these activities more critical than that.

With the exception of team sports, which it is likely were being undertaken as part of school extra-curricular programme, less than a fifth of the young people were taking part in activities requiring organisation, the acquisition of specific skills or a high level of commitment. This was not because these activities were not of interest. Camping, canoeing sailing and martial arts all held attractions for between a third and two thirds of the sample. The activities in which young people were interested also received the "not interested" treatment from a third or more of the sample. Few of the activities which it is possible to drop in and drop out of attracted such disdain. Music was of interest to many and of disinterest to comparatively few, which provides more support to Willis' (1990a; 1990b) image of young people with culturally rich lives.

All young people wanted to drop in and drop out some of the time and some young people wanted this sort of life-style all of the time. There is, however, in terms of more structured activities, a gap between that which young people were doing and that which they would have liked to do and the reasons they gave for this were, more often than not, multiple. Notable exceptions were outdoor pursuits for which they said there were inadequate local facilities and going to the pub which was not allowed by parents. The other aspects of the multiple answers included cost and transport.

Broadland Community Survey

Most of the people who were asked for information for Samantha's study were aged between 10 and 20 and one of the questions she asked them concerned the activities they would like to see available at the youth and community centre. She does not say how many young people, or even people, made a suggestion or whether any of the suggestions were given by more than one person, but her list, from American football to yoga numbers 35 and about half of the activities on it were already available, though the respondents may not have known this.

Costessey School Foyer Survey

Most of the young people in the school foyer survey said there was more than one thing they would like to do. Most (16) said 'meeting friends' and approximately equal numbers (10 or 11) said 'sport', 'drama' and 'music'; the DYCO's interpretation of this latter category was that it concerned listening rather than playing. Several other activities received the support of one two or three of the young people.

Downham Market Summer Project Survey

The young people were asked to respond 'yes' or 'no' to a list of 16 suggested sources of worry.

5.12 The things 24 Downham Market young people worry about	
	No. of Young People saying 'Yes'
Drugs, alcohol and smoking	14
Jobs and work	13
Being lonely	13
Illness	12
The way they are treated	11
School	11
Money	10
Being in trouble	10
Gambling	7
Friends	7
The problems of growing up	7
The places they live	4
The people they live with	4
Transport	3
Sex	3
Religion	1

Top of the list came: drugs, alcohol or smoking, jobs and work, being lonely and illness. Half or more of the young people said they were worried about these. A third or more said they were worried about the way people treat them, school, money and being in trouble.

Young Women and Housing in Great Yarmouth

Almost all of these young women desperately needed better quality housing, suitable for their children and sensitively administered. They needed relief from the poverty which was preventing them from providing adequate food, shelter and warmth for themselves and their children and which forced them into the trap which was exploitation by the men with whom they were having or had had relationships, by landlords in the private sector of this sea-side town and by members of their families who recognised the young women's caring skills. The overwhelming experience of these young women was isolation. Family support came with a price tag. They no longer felt they had enough in common with young women of their own age but without children to maintain former friendships nor to create new ones; nor did they feel comfortable in the "mums and toddlers" environment. These young women were often not able to articulate their needs nor to negotiate for what they wanted with other services, for example Social Services and the Housing Department: they needed advocates and they needed the political skill and self-confidence to do away with them.

Hellesdon Unattached Group

These young women were fairly self-sufficient. All were working, all but one held a driving licence. One of them had her own car and three of them had regular access to a car in the family. All were living "at home". Only one member of the group, the least forthcoming, had pursued her education beyond the age of 16.

I asked the young women whether a service especially for young people could do anything for them. Nicola, one of the young women, was adamant that her job provided her with everything she needed, that was, the cash to undertake leisure pursuits. Justina said she would like the opportunity to do voluntary work with the elderly or with people with disabilities, in the company of other young people as part

of an organisation. Several of the young women said that commercially available and Council sports activities were beyond their means in the quantity they wanted to undertake them, so they sought subsidised access; free sports was something that they missed from their school days. One or two of the young women could see a role for a Youth Service in organising minority interest activities, enabling young people with similar interests to get together, and in organising activities which they felt were logistically difficult, like weekends and longer periods away from home; adventure holidays were mentioned specifically. The young women could also see a role for a Service which organised events for which large numbers are an integral feature. They expressed their willingness to take part in fundraising events to help others but knew of no channels through which they could do this on a regular basis.

Hethersett Group Discussion and Survey

The young people at Hethersett valued the opportunity to be 'out and about'. Almost all of the positives they listed about their youth club involved off-site activities: canoeing, roller-skating, ten-pin bowling, beach barbecues and trips of one sort or another. Having fun and "never a dull moment" were high priorities. When asked 'Why?', the best they were able to manage was a few tentative attempts at 'In which respects?' They appreciated the opportunity to meet new people, but equally important to this group, was the opportunity to meet people they knew already but in a different setting. They gave the example of a beach barbecue, held jointly with another youth club, some of the members of which they knew already from school but did not usually see out of school.

When asked about the things the young people disliked, there was little variety in their responses. They disliked feeling that there was nothing to do or nothing new to do and the feeling of boredom, but they did not suggest that they often felt bored.

King's Lynn Group Discussion

I asked the young people what they would include if they were planning the programme for their youth club in the future. They suggested a range of activities, none of which had been attempted before, as far as they could remember. They included trips and outings: evening, day-time and residential. They seemed to be suggesting that the youth club is a place for trying new things out. They went on to say that there was too much boys' football, but that when attempts to create more equal use of the sports hall by girls and by boys, that the boys whose only interest was football had ceased to come to the youth club.

I asked whether the youth club should provide young people with any particular kind of information. The young people wanted advance information about the youth club programme and about other events and activities for young people in the King's Lynn area and beyond. I asked whether the youth club should provide young people with help of any kind and the group agreed unanimously that, although individual young people felt able to discuss individual problems with individual youth workers, they did not want the youth club to be about problems. Most of the young people wanted, most of the time, to leave problems behind them when they came to the youth club.

I asked the young people whether they felt they were ever unfairly treated. They said that some other young people felt that lower age limits on youth club activities were unfair. They felt they had a right to more places to go. The girls felt they had been treated differently from the boys at the local amusement arcade. They felt that favouritism at school was commonplace.

I asked whether young people in King's Lynn have worries for the future, for when they leave school. They discussed the problems of finding jobs and housing, during which discussion the hidden economy arose as a feature of their lives in King's Lynn, but no-one had yet given much thought to these issues.

King's Lynn Outreach Survey

In a pre-coded question, the young people were asked to describe themselves and the adjectives they selected present an image of a largely untroubled and untroublesome youth population. They were asked to compare, in importance, leisure time with their occupations and it was clear that their leisure time was, in the main, very important to them, as important or more important than their occupations for more than half of the young people. About half of the young people had been to a youth club, but there was not much agreement about what they had liked best. Only 'meeting friends', 'sports' and 'football' were listed by more than a single young person. The young people were asked to note 'unfair situations', if any, by which they felt affected. Eighteen young people answered the question but again there was little consensus, except 'being wrongly blamed', 'school', 'victimisation by teachers' and 'bullying', which all received more than one mention.

Taverham Collage

The images the young people selected were of fast cars, powerful motor-cycles and sex. A minority aspired to academic success and some of the young people chose less racy, more peaceful images like flowers. Noting the emphasis on sex, the young people were divided into own gender groups and encouraged to pursue, in a flip-chart and felt-pen exercise, the attributes of their 'ideal partner'. Only the girls wanted to participate in this and much of what they said concerned their ideal man's physique and image, but they expressed familiarity with domestic violence. Their ideal man would be 'not a girlfriend basher'.

The Survey of Young People through Young People

This survey was in part concerned with the potential functions of the Youth Service and it approached this question via four different sections relating to meeting places, activities, wants and needs and preoccupations.

<u>Meeting Places</u>

Asked about finding suitable places to meet their friends, half the young people said they found no difficulty. There were some differences between these young people and those who said it was difficult to find suitable places. Young people in some categories were disproportionately affected.

5.13	Young people who had difficulty finding places to meet friends: percentages of sub-groups in the sample (chi-squared test)			
Age group	14 - 16 yrs. %	17 - 19 yrs. %		Significance Level
	61	39		.0035
Occupation	School %	Tertiary Education %	Work or Scheme %	Unem-ployed %
	66	52	36	39 .0020
Location of Home	City or Suburbs %	Town %	Village %	Country-side %
	55	36	58	73 .0100

More of those in the younger half of the sample had difficulty than those in the older half. Fewer of those in work than in any other occupation had difficulty. The problem also related to the type of area where the young people were living. Those in towns had least difficulty, next came those in the city or suburbs, on a par with those in villages, while those in the countryside found it hardest.

The young people who said they had no difficulty, then said where they met their friends, giving one or two places each.

5.14   Young people's meeting places
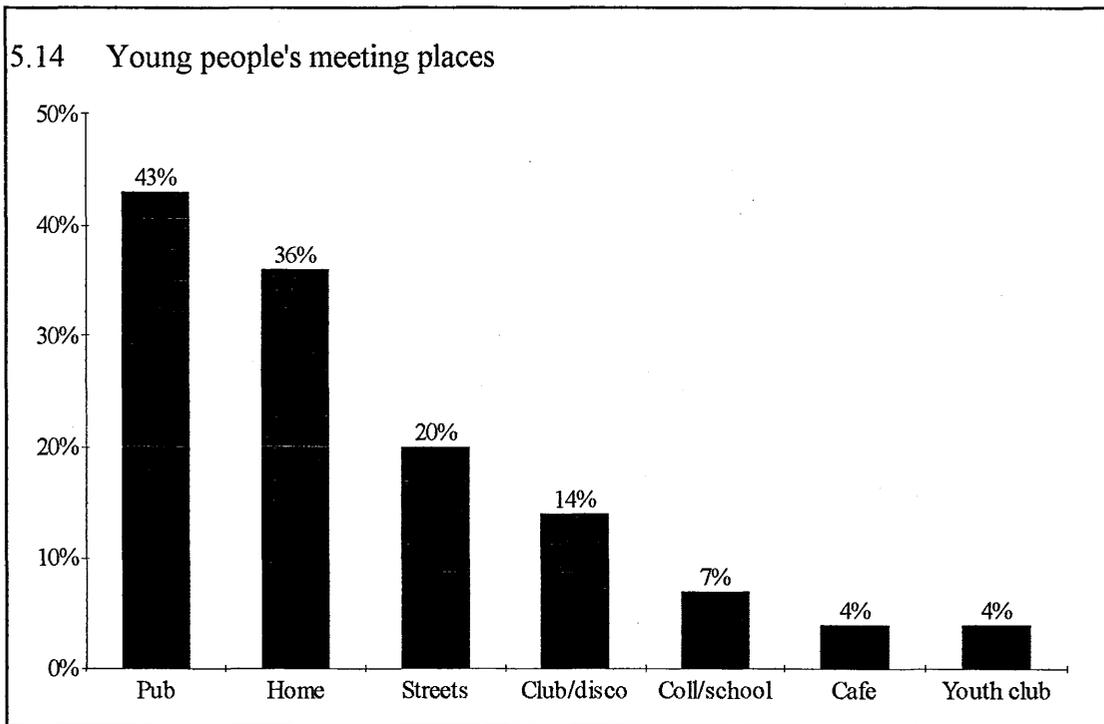
The pub was mentioned most frequently overall. Differences between sub-groups in

the sample were observed in respect of age group, occupation and the locality of

home. There were no gender differences in usual meeting places.

5.15	Young people's meeting places: percentages of sub groups in the sample (chi-squared test)			

Age Group	14 - 16 yrs. %	17 - 19 yrs %	Significance Level
Pub	13	45	
Home	42	58	
Streets	25	3	.0009

Occupation	School %	Tertiary Education %	Work or Scheme %	Unem- ployed %	
Pub	11	8	51	25	
Home	14	39	22	50	
Streets	25	8	6	13	.0018

Locality of Home	City or Suburbs %	Town %	Village %	Country- side %	
Pub	22	35	33	25	
Home	44	17	27	0	
Streets	22	15	3	0	.0053

A greater proportion of the older cohort, of those in work and of those in towns were making use of the pub. A smaller proportion of those in the city and in the countryside were using pubs as meeting places. More of those who were younger and who were living in urban areas were meeting their friends on the streets and other similarly public places.

Those who did have difficulty in finding places to meet their friends were asked what they would consider to be suitable places.

5.16 Young people's would-be meeting places
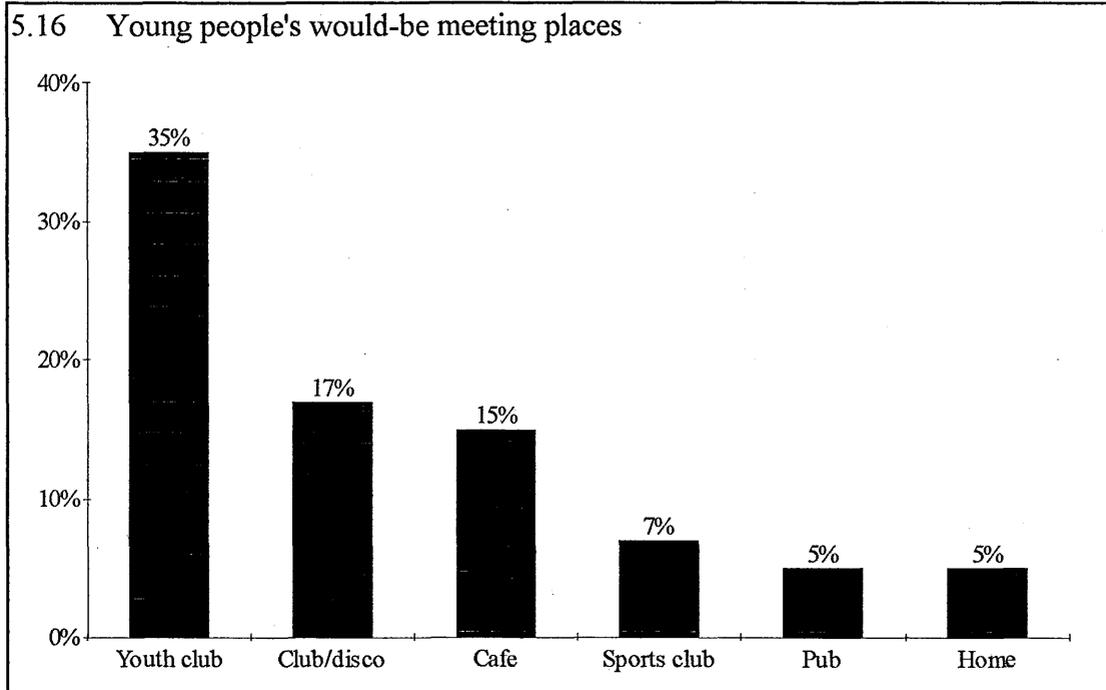
This list differs markedly from the previous one, partly no doubt because of the age difference between the two groups. Home and pubs come low rather than high and the street is not mentioned. These three most available venues in the locality are presumably thought to be unsuitable, unattractive, or inaccessible because of age.

Youth clubs, interestingly, are here at the top of the list: a third say they would meet the need, though they are little mentioned by the first group as actual meeting places. They were for the first group, perhaps, infrequent or unmemorable meeting places. The second group - the younger ones - seem to be saying that in some respects, at least, they would be quite suitable.

Many of the young people added riders to their suggestions, the most frequent of which was "open all hours". Generally they wanted a relaxing atmosphere, somewhere warm and cheap to sit with their friends, where no-one has to do anything, where there is music, and where (of concern to some) there is no adult supervision. For some, the issues of "access" and of "territory" seem important. Some young people referred to the age group for which their would-be meeting place should cater,

and they wanted a narrow age band in which they themselves were slightly younger than average.

Activities

Forty four percent of the sample said there were things they would like to do but could not. These 89 young people came up with 51 different suggestions. Most of the young people gave only one answer, though some gave two. Some of the activities given were very specific, for example windsurfing, canoeing, sailing. Fewer were more general headings encompassing a range of options, like water-sports or motor-sports. The young people were not asked and did not say how much they wanted to pursue the activities they suggested, so for some, they may simply have been pipe-dreams but for others quite serious desires.

Lack of facilities was the reason most gave for not being able to pursue the activity of their choice, but they often gave more than one reason. There is no pattern to the relationship between the activity and the reason why it could not be pursued. There is, however, a commonsense relationship between the reasons themselves. What was perceived as 'no facilities' by one young person might easily have been perceived as a 'transport problem' or even as 'cost' by another.

5.17   Young people's reasons for not pursuing chosen activities
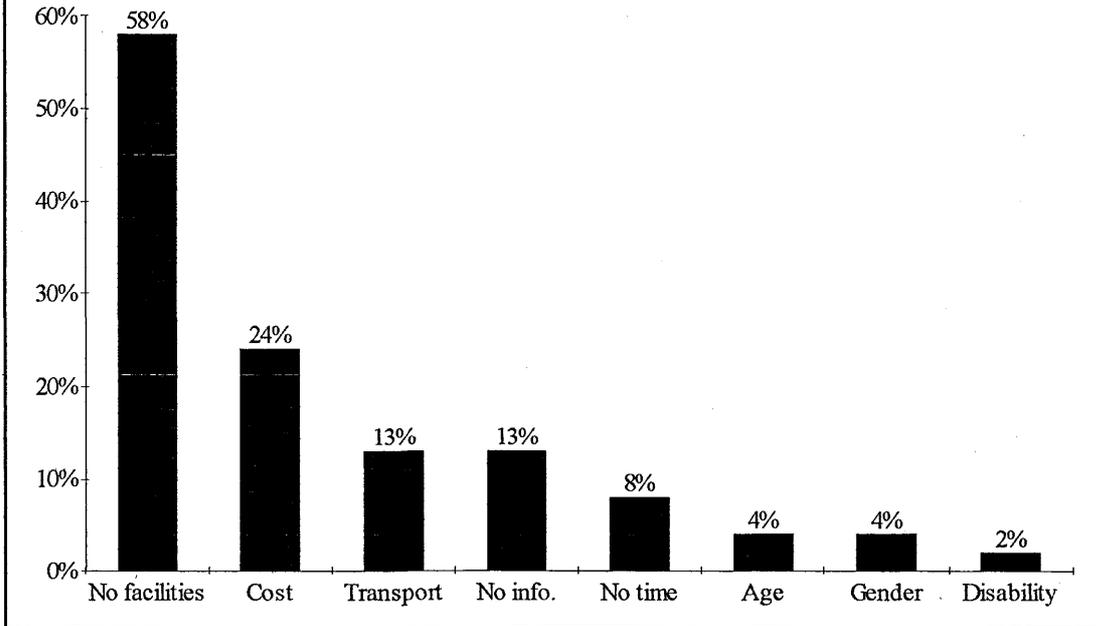
Proportionately more of the younger sub-group were affected by distance, discrimination and lack of information, and proportionately more of the older sub-group in respect of lack of time. There were no other differences between sub-groups in the sample.

5.18   Reasons for not pursuing chosen activities:
        differences in relation to age group (chi-squared test)

	14 - 16 yrs. %	17 - 19 yrs. %	Significance Level
Distance	12	5	
Discrimination	12	3	
Lack of Information	12	5	
Lack of Time	0	16	.0375

Wants and Needs

The investigation of young people's needs was based on Maslow's hierarchy (1981), used by Shuttleworth (1990) rather than Mia Kellmer Pringle's classification (1980), used by Smith (1982) because the issue of one group of needs in relation to others, the business of weighing up importance, or hierarchy, seemed important to the

Norfolk question. Maslow used a five-fold classification of need, strictly ranked, as follows.

Self-Actualisation
Esteem
Social
Safety
Physiological

(Maslow, 1981)

The young people were asked to rank, in order of importance to them, a set of 15 indicators of the three highest concepts. These were presented on separate cards in random order.

Social (S)
- to have one good friend
- to be part of a group of friends
- someone to love who loves me
- a place I belong

Esteem (E)
- to be taken seriously
- self-respect
- to be allowed to make my own decisions
- to be treated with respect
- to be valued for who I am

Self-Actualisation (SA)
- something interesting to do
- to learn more about myself
- something to look forward to
- to enjoy myself
- to feel really good in myself about something
- to face challenges

Overall, the statements were ranked in the order shown overleaf.

5.19   Statements ranked in order of importance to young people

		Median rank (potential range 1 - 15)
To enjoy myself	SA	4
Someone to love who loves me	S	5
To be allowed to make my own decisions	E	6
To be valued for who I am	E	6
To be taken seriously	E	7
To be part of a group of friends	S	7
To be treated with respect	E	7
Self-respect	E	8
To feel really good in myself about something	SA	8
To have one good friend	S	9
Something interesting to do	SA	10
A place I belong	S	10
Something to look forward to	SA	11
To face challenges	SA	11
To learn more about myself	SA	12

The young people generally ranked the esteem items more important than the belongingness ones and both more important than self-actualisation.

5.20	Statements of need: differences between sub-groups in the sample (Kruskal-Wallis test, showing mean rankings and chi-squared statistic, when low mean ranking indicates greater importance)				
Age Groups		14 - 16	17 - 19	Chi-squared	Significance Level
To have one good friend (S)		92.73	106.55	2.9003	.0886
A place I belong (S)		92.89	107.48	3.2165	.0729
Gender		Male	Female		
To be treated with respect (E)		109.56	90.54	5.4627	.0199
To be valued for who I am (E)		116.88	83.29	17.0663	.0000
Something interesting to do (SA)		83.88	115.96	15.5347	.0001
To face challenges (SA)		91.62	108.29	4.2014	.0404

There was a higher ranking of social need by the younger half of the sample. Young women, more than young men ranked esteem of greater importance; young men, more than young women ranked self-actualisation of greater importance.

Respondents were then asked to decide whether they regarded each of the indicators as a 'want' or a 'need'. They could put as many as they liked in each pile and, they tended to put about half in each. However there was not much agreement about which statements went into which pile, so that on half the items, the young people were divided 50-50 on whether it was a want or a need. However there were a few that a clear majority

considered to be needs rather than wants, all from the belongingness or esteem clusters:

<blockquote>
self-respect;

someone to love who loves me;

to be treated with respect;

a place I belong.
</blockquote>

Conversely, there were some that a clear majority considered to be wants rather than needs, and all of these were from the self-actualisation cluster:

<blockquote>
something interesting to do;

to learn more about myself;

something to look forward to;

to face challenges.
</blockquote>

Generally, items selected as needs were also ranked more important than those selected as wants.

Young people expressed modesty in their expectations. They made their own classification of wants and needs and relegated many of the quite ordinary indicators to the wants category. They recognised their value but felt they could live without them. Furthermore they revealed that relationships and the way people treat them are very important to them.

Preoccupations and Anxieties

In an open-ended question, the young people were asked to think of a friend about the same age as themselves and to say what they believed was his or her greatest anxiety or what most often occupied his or her thoughts. It was possible to include in the analysis 95% of the total response.

5.21 Young people's preoccupations
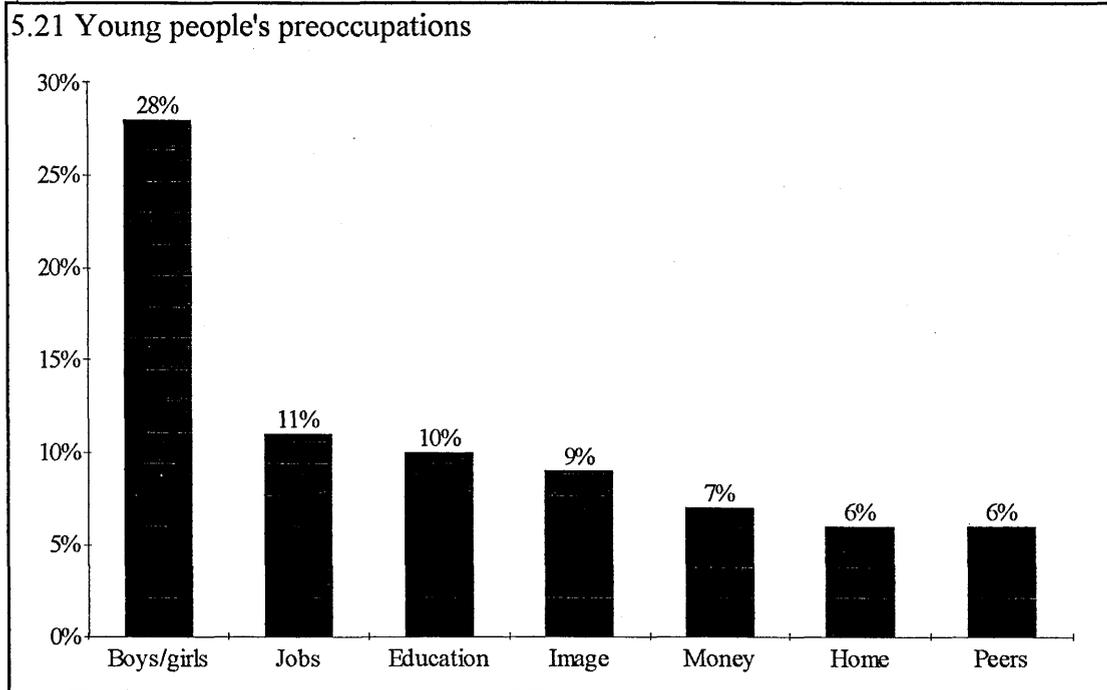
The main one was boy/girl relationships; this concern was slightly greater amongst the friends of the younger half of the sample.

5.22 Young people's preoccupations: differences between age groups (chi-squared test)

	14 - 16 yrs. %	17 - 19 yrs. %	Significance Level
Boys/Girls	30	26	
School/College	12	9	
Image/Appearance	12	6	
Home	7	5	
Jobs	7	16	
Money	4	10	
Peers/Popularity	3	10	.0487

Jobs, money and popularity with friends were preoccupations more of the older than younger ones. The converse was true for school, the image they projected and home.

Purpose and Functions of the Service in Relation to Young People's Needs

Social and Recreational Needs

Social and recreational activities fall into the group of concerns, most often recorded as most important by the youth workers. Meeting friends, belonging, sports and leisure were said to be relevant to a majority of young people, by more than half of the youth workers. Boredom in leisure time was the only "problem issue" said by youth workers to directly affect a majority of young people.

Several of the youth work initiatives had something to say about young people's need to meet friends. The Attleborough youth forum concluded that it wanted the youth club to be open every night of the week: companionship was one of the items these young people sought. The school foyer survey conducted by the DYCO at Costessey found that two thirds of the young people wanted to meet friends. Association turned out to be one of the over-riding needs of the young women with their own children at Great Yarmouth which was surprising given the more elementary needs of food, warmth and shelter which were expressed by this group. The young people at Hethersett wanted to meet new people and people they already knew from school but who they did not usually see out of school. Meeting new people from different areas and backgrounds was recorded as a positive element of the King's Lynn youth club programme. Loddon youth club members gave friendship as one of their reasons for attending the youth club; meeting new people was particularly important to the girls.

The Belton and Bradwell 'Youth Matters' survey indicated that all young people were spending at least some of their time engaged in activities requiring little forethought and no special skills or commitment, like watching television and videos and some young people wanted to do this sort of thing in all of their leisure time. (It is impossible to say whether these activities were social or solitary or a mixture of both.) However it also revealed a gap between the activities which young people would have liked to do and those which they were able to do. Adventure activities of the water-

sports, outdoor pursuits and martial arts varieties were attractive to between a third and two thirds of the sample but attracted active disinterest as well. The Broadland survey listed 35 different activities which young people and other members of the community would have like to see on offer at the youth and community centre. About half of the young people in the Costessey survey wanted to engage in sport. The Hellesdon young women said they would have preferred, when they were younger, a youth club with lots to do but not to be forced to do it. They now considered themselves much too old for youth clubs but sought access to sports facilities at a price they could afford; they wanted residential opportunities and they wanted adventure activities. The young people at Hethersett wanted to be out and about, taking part in activities like canoeing, roller-skating and ten-pin bowling which were not available in their immediate community. King's Lynn youth club members included a sports tournament and an adventure/survival weekend in their positive memorable experiences of their youth club. Of the 14 conventional youth club activities on offer at Loddon, each was enjoyed by between a half and two thirds of the membership, although proportionately more girls than boys enjoyed discussions.

Half of the respondents in the survey through young people recorded no difficulty in finding places to meet their friends. These were more likely to be the older young people, those who were working, those living in towns rather than in other types of location and they were likely to be meeting (in descending order of popularity) at the pub, in one another's homes or in public places, like the streets. The other half said they found difficulty in finding suitable places to meet friends. These young people were more likely to be in the younger half of the sample and to be living in the countryside where it was hardest or in villages equally as difficult as the city.

Eighty nine young people suggested 51 different activities that they would have liked to undertake but could not. Some of these were highly specialised or required considerable knowledge or technical skill; some were so specific that the sense of no substitute being acceptable was gained.

The young people ranked esteem, especially the girls and young women, higher than belongingness, especially the younger half of the sample, higher than self-actualisation, especially the boys and young men. They ranked esteem and belongingness indicators as needs and self-actualisation indicators as wants.

There is much in the data from the different youth work initiatives and from the survey through young people to support the views of youth workers insofar as there is a role for youth work to provide opportunities for young people to associate with one another, to meet new people and to meet familiar people in different settings. The youth workers were referring mainly to teenagers of statutory school age and this was the age group of most of the young people who confirmed their views. Two of the youth work initiatives say something about the association needs of older young people. The need to associate was great amongst the young people whose lives were different from the majority of young people in their age group because they were parents as well as young people. There is a danger here in that affirmation of the role of association may imply affirmation of youth clubs. The Hellesdon group of young women clearly articulated the unsuitability of youth clubs for young people in their age group (17 to 19 years) and the arrangements of most youth clubs (meeting times, use of rooms and so on) renders them wholly unsuitable for young parents and their children.

Furthermore, the young people right across the Youth Service age range wanted recreational activities and the Belton and Bradwell survey suggested that for a small proportion of young people, this was all that they wanted. A larger proportion also sought more structured sports, adventure and 'away from home' activities. The young people who were sports and adventure activity-oriented wanted sophistication and a fair degree of specialisation. The survey through young people suggested that these opportunities were sought more by boys than by girls. A few of the youth work initiatives specifically mentioned arts experiences. The Attleborough youth forum included the opportunity for artistic expression as one of its outcomes. The Belton and

Bradwell survey found that music was the only activity which attracted substantial interest without substantial disdain. In the school foyer survey at Costessey, as many young people opted for drama and for music as for sports. The Hellesdon young women could see a role for a young people's service in organising events for which large numbers are an integral feature: concerts spring to mind. Music was mentioned, in passing, by other groups. While what the young people had to say about recreational and sports activities supports that which was said by youth workers, but their additional comments about music and arts seem to contradict the youth workers' view that music and arts are of interest to a minority and support the findings of Willis (1990a; 1990b).

Only one of the groups who took part in this second part of the research project mentioned boredom. The young people in this group said how much they disliked feeling bored, not that it was a frequent problem. A majority of the youth workers said that boredom in leisure time was a problem for a majority of young people and this is quite a serious difference in perceptions, of themselves by young people and of young people by the adults who were working with them.

The Need for "Problem Solving"

The relationship between youth workers' and young people's expressions and the less tangible functions of youth work is not so straightforward. Each of the three parts of the research project uncovered some measure of concern about issues which may be dealt with in a variety of ways. For example, relationships, issues of personal identity and the "social problems" were all raised by youth workers as most important concerns facing young people, albeit by fewer than those who mentioned occupation and leisure. Youth workers considered the suggested concerns of meeting friendly adults, project work, self-management and community involvement as relevant to a minority of young people. More of them than not found 19 out of 20 of the suggested "problem issues" as relevant to a minority. It is not clear whether they considered the

problems to be relatively unimportant in their own right or whether they considered them to be unimportant because of their transience in accord with the social category of youth itself.

The youth work initiatives (Belton and Bradwell, Downham Market, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and King's Lynn Outreach, Taverham) raised a variety of issues of concern to young people and some of these are implicitly or explicitly problematic. The issues include: AIDS, appearance, discrimination, drug abuse, education, employment, esteem, exploitation, health, housing, illness, image, loneliness, money, poverty, pregnancy, relationships and being in trouble. Young people in other locations (Attleborough, King's Lynn, Hellesdon) expressed aspirations to be challenged, to give something to their community and valued the opportunity to change and to be self-sufficient. The nature of these investigations was such that it is impossible to say how widely or with what degrees of severity these issues and aspirations were felt.

The survey through young people reinforces, from a more systematic investigation, at least some of these concerns. Esteem was found to be of over-riding importance, especially to the girls and young women, in comparison with the other stages in Maslow's hierarchy (1981). Relationships, occupation, education all scored more than ten percent when young people were asked about the major concern of a friend about the same age as themselves.

While the research has raised plenty of issues which are perceived by youth workers or young people or both to be concerns or anxieties, the data considered in this chapter says little about the ways in which these might be addressed within a youth work frame-work.

Evidence of Deficit

The deficit expression is most commonly employed with reference to providing a service for individual young people who have somehow slipped through the net of services provided by the "proper" agencies. The research project found nothing to indicate that particular individuals were thus affected. Rather it found a deficit at two levels, that of the type of community and that of communities of interest. Youth workers seemed to be suggesting that young people in rural areas, away from the holiday resorts, are more concerned about social, recreational, sports and leisure opportunities. This implies a deficit of provision related to demography and the associated differences in economy and social life, a deficit affecting particular types of community rather than particular geographical communities or particular young people. While youth workers were saying that social life and recreational activities were important to a majority of young people in all types of community, they were perhaps saying that in urban areas and in holiday resorts, the facilities for these were better in place than in market towns, in villages and in the countryside. Young people in the survey through young people supported the view with those in the countryside, then the villages on a par with the city, finding it harder than their compatriots in the towns to find places to meet their friends.

With further reference to meeting places, these were more difficult to find for the younger half of the sample, a deficit affecting a community, albeit a large one, of interest in respect of age. Another community of interest was the group of young women with their own children at Great Yarmouth. Most young women in their age group (15 to 22) had little difficulty in meeting people like themselves, but these young women had great difficulty because they constitute a small proportion of the population and because their poverty and their lack of mobility restricted their freedom. It might be supposed that all of the young people, described as a minority by youth workers, directly affected by the 'problem issues' are not individuals but the

members of communities of interest into which further investigation might suggest youth work functions.

The Case for Advocacy

Advocacy is perhaps the least well used of the identified functions. It is possibly the least well understood or perhaps it is simply the most invisible. So the question which arises is what sort of data suggests its employment. In answer, the data which is referred to here is of three types. At the most general level, it constitutes illustrations of the concerns of the entire age group, a comparatively powerless minority in society. It shows that there are sub-groups of young people who in some way fall foul of the policy and the practices of powerful agencies and individuals. It demonstrates some scope at the most micro level of individual young people who, for any reason, are unable to speak for themselves or who are not being heard.

The concerns which most youth workers considered to be paramount were those of work, of school and of leisure. The first two of these are not usually the business of youth work, but given the rapidly changing economic climate of the 1980s and the transformation of the ethos of education from the option of a liberal curriculum to the national curriculum, young people were understandably under pressure in these arenas of their lives. Politicians were debating the education and employment of teenagers, parents were being consulted but there was no-one to articulate and reiterate the feeling of the impact on young people.

The young people who took part in the youth work initiatives which echoed the views of youth workers with respect to young people and social, recreational and sporting activities made it clear that diversity, specialisation and sophistication are important, especially to older young people. The statutory Youth Service can never be adequately funded to respond to this and many voluntary organisations are similarly unsophisticated but youth workers could advocate young people's access and welcome in public and commercial outlets targeting adults.

The young people in the survey through young people reinforced the notion of diversity. Furthermore they revealed that of all the essentials in life, esteem is of utmost importance to them. There is little understanding of or response to this by the people who work with young people or deal with young people in agencies within and beyond youth work. There is perhaps scope for advocacy on a grand scale to increase people's understanding might result in better education, health and social services for young people.

The youth workers responded to the 20 suggested 'problem issues' by saying that they thought 19 of them to directly affect a minority. The young people they were referring to here constitute sub-groups, some of which at least were affected by public policies and practices. For example, those who were geographically isolated, a problem compounded by the absence of personal transport in the household and by youth, were being directly affected by public transport decisions in the county. There is surely potential in cases like these for a youth work agency to present the argument for young people in an arena where young people are themselves denied access?

One of the youth work initiatives also presented scope, not so much for a representative as for an intermediary, interestingly enough within the youth club. Neither youth workers nor young people were disregarding one another but they were failing to communicate which was resulting in one group of young people 's experience of youth work being largely negative.

Another of the youth work initiatives, the Great Yarmouth young women, presented a strong case for the introduction of personal advocates. These young women were being treated in ways which they perceived as being unfair and hostile by the District Housing Department (for which organisation not one of them had a good word), by private landlords, sometimes by social workers, by the foster parents of their children and by their families. The youth worker at the project often took on the role of advocate but demand was such that each of these young women could have used their own personal advocate for short periods of their lives. The young women were

too demoralised by their circumstances, too distracted by their children and other demands on them and too physically tired to do justice to their own cases.

The young women who used the youth worker in this way had an extremely strong rapport with her and this relationship between a young person and a non-family adult may be unusual.

Needs as the Root of Provision

The question which is important is how far an investigation of young people's needs can go in guiding the purpose and functions of a Youth Service. Without a firm philosophical back-drop, a frame-work to define the field of operation, policies to determine the ways in which information is collected and interpretations made, investigations of need raise more questions than they answer. The questions which remain unanswered include whose view should be regarded as paramount and how degrees of importance can be attached to one group of needs over and above the rest.

On a more constructive note, this investigation has revealed some very understandable differences between sub-groups of young people, endorsing practitioner understanding of, for example, the feelings of girls and young women (Carpenter and Young, 1986; Spence, 1990), endorsing recent academic work on young people's cultural lives (Willis, 1990a; 1990b), endorsing management understanding of the client group of youth clubs, endorsing views of rural youth (Fabes and Banks, 1991) and 'locale' as a strong influence on young people's concerns and aspirations (MacDonald, 1991).

CHAPTER SIX

YOUTH PROVISION IN NORFOLK

Another group of data, which might have illuminated the issues, was that around existing practice. The questions I asked of this material were concerned with the potential of NYCS to address the aspirations and anxieties, raised by young people themselves and by youth workers on their behalf. They were additionally concerned with what sort of benefits young people perceived they were deriving from their experience of youth work.

Youth Workers' Views

The survey of youth workers' views included adults working in county centres (the statutory sector) and all small, independent youth clubs and groups (divisional clubs), most of which were being run by volunteers as part of local community, village and church hall programmes. Workers were asked, at the end of the questionnaire, whether their clubs were part of a wider youth organisation or movement. Two thirds replied to this question, of whom 75% (half the respondents) said they were part of NYCS, 11% church-based movements and 1% Youth Clubs UK. NYCS clearly had a strong identity with youth groups in the county.

Involvement with the Youth Service in Norfolk was largely a regular but infrequent experience for its young people. More than half of the youth workers reported that their clubs were meeting once a week or less.

6.1 Frequency of youth group meetings
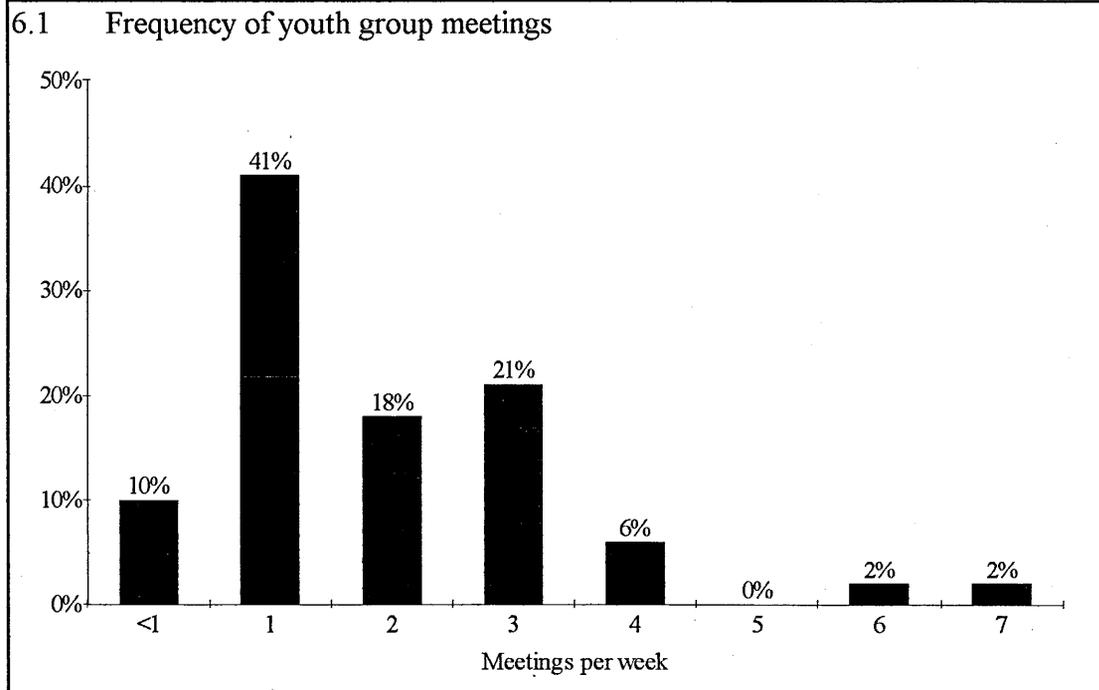
Workers were asked to say whether they felt their clubs and groups were making a response to a range of suggested areas of concern, the same "general" and "specific" needs as in the previous chapter. Youth workers said that the most frequent attempts were for majority concerns but, despite the infrequency of youth group meetings, there was also significant attention paid to minority issues.

6.2 The response of youth groups to majority concerns

	Clubs Responding %	Youth Workers Recording Majority Concern %
Meeting friends	74	92
Sports and leisure activities	71	68
Being part of a club/group	68	72
Boredom in leisure time	64	67

6.3 The response of clubs to minority concerns		
	Clubs Responding %	Youth Workers Recording Minority Concern %
Meeting friendly adults	59	47
Pursuing projects	49	54
Planning and managing own activities	49	56
Arts and music events or experiences	48	58
Misuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs	45	42
Unemployment	45	44
Problems at home	44	64
Difficult transition to adulthood	41	44
Contributing to community	40	60
Poor relationship with peers	40	62
Trouble at school	35	67
Trouble with the law	34	62
Anxiety about sex and sexuality	32	41
Gambling and gaming machine addiction	26	44
Transport and geographical isolation	24	37
Unequal opportunities	23	43
Sexually transmitted diseases	22	38
Difficulties with school or college work	21	58
Getting and keeping a job	20	44
Debt or financial hardship	19	46
Risk of sexual abuse	16	45
Confusion with religious beliefs or spiritual development	15	44
Early parenthood	13	46
Difficulties with accommodation	9	45

Invited to comment on the strengths of the Service and on areas for improvement, the workers felt its greatest strengths were in providing meeting places,

friendly adults and sports/leisure facilities - similar to the responses they attributed to their own clubs. A clear majority said it needed to improve in facilitating participation, providing arts experiences, and responding to wider environmental issues. Youth workers seemed to be saying that these were important - this was their view about what the Service ought to be delivering - but that they were not well provided.

Workers were asked for an estimate of the age range of their regular attenders. The mean lower age was 12.5 years and the mean upper age was 16.5, although this latter range stretched from 15 to 19 years. They were also asked to give the percentage of girls and young women among the regular attenders in their youth groups; the mean was 40%.

6.4   Girls and young women within youth groups
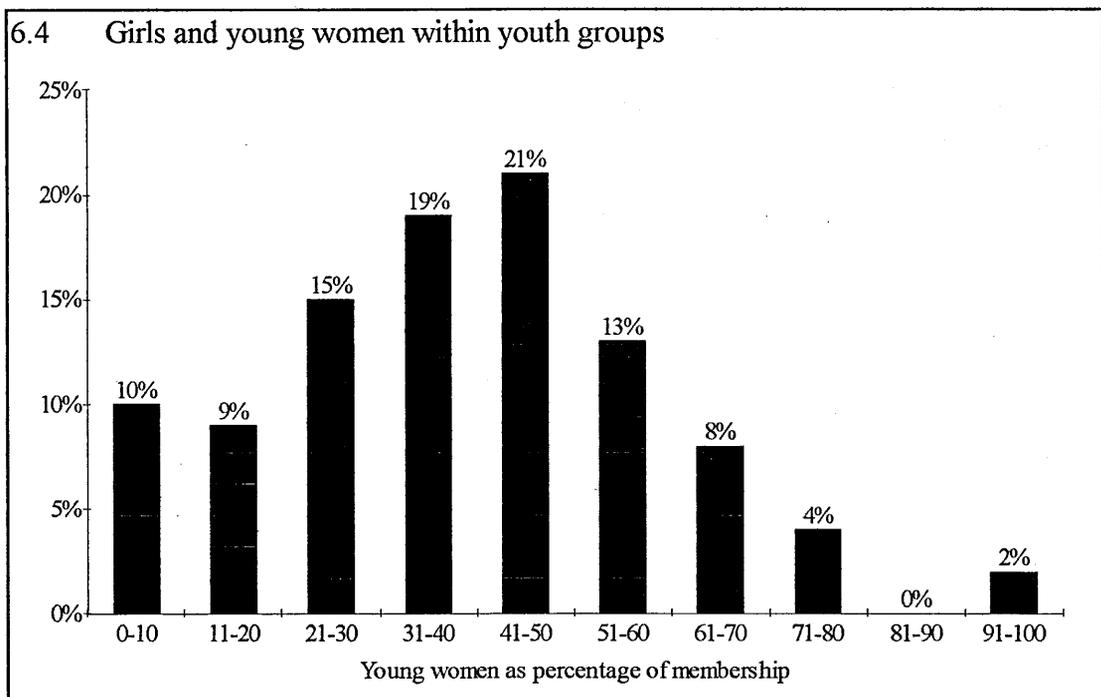
It was estimated that there were between 520 and 650 people working with young people in county centres and divisional clubs. The list of names and addresses eventually numbered 524, of whom more than half were volunteers (55%), more than a third were part-time paid youth workers (39%) and just 6% were full-time youth workers.

The response to the survey was by 51%. The mean age of youth workers was 37 and more than half of the total was aged between 30 and 45. Ten percent were under 21 which is a reflection of the transition made by some young people from member to worker status.

6.5   Youth workers' ages
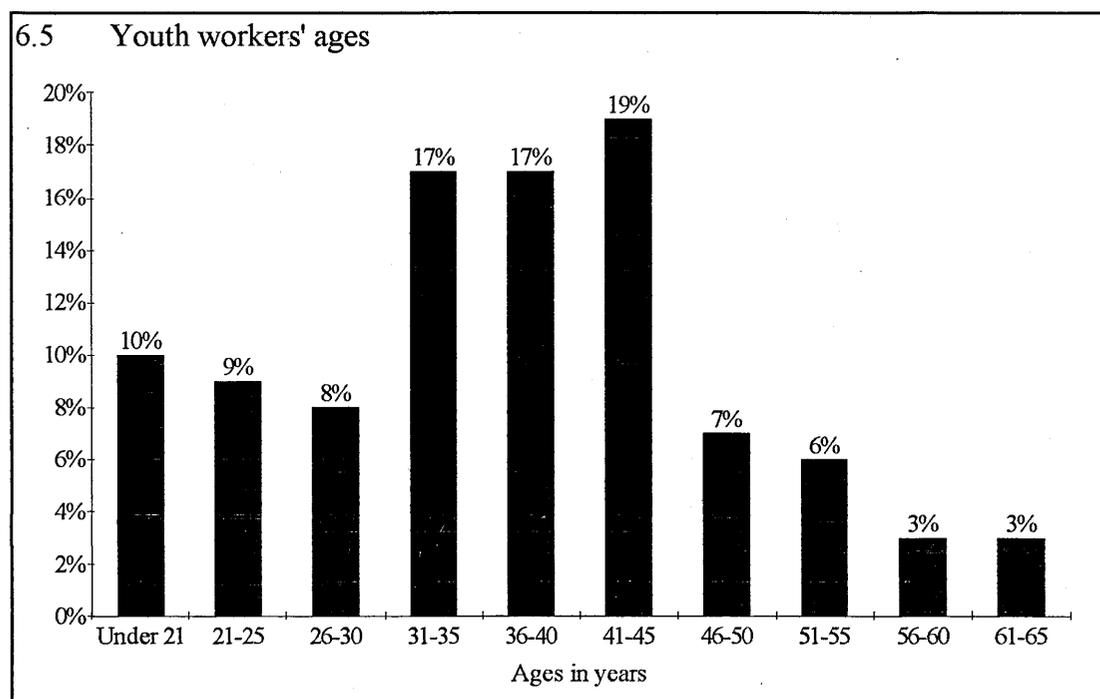
There were approximately equal numbers of men and women overall, although women made up only a quarter of the full-time youth workers.

When the total was divided by role in the service, 47% were volunteers, 43% were part-time paid and 10% were full-time (see figure 6.6 overleaf).

6.6   Status of youth workers

Full-time (10%)

Volunteers (47%)

Part-time paid (43%)
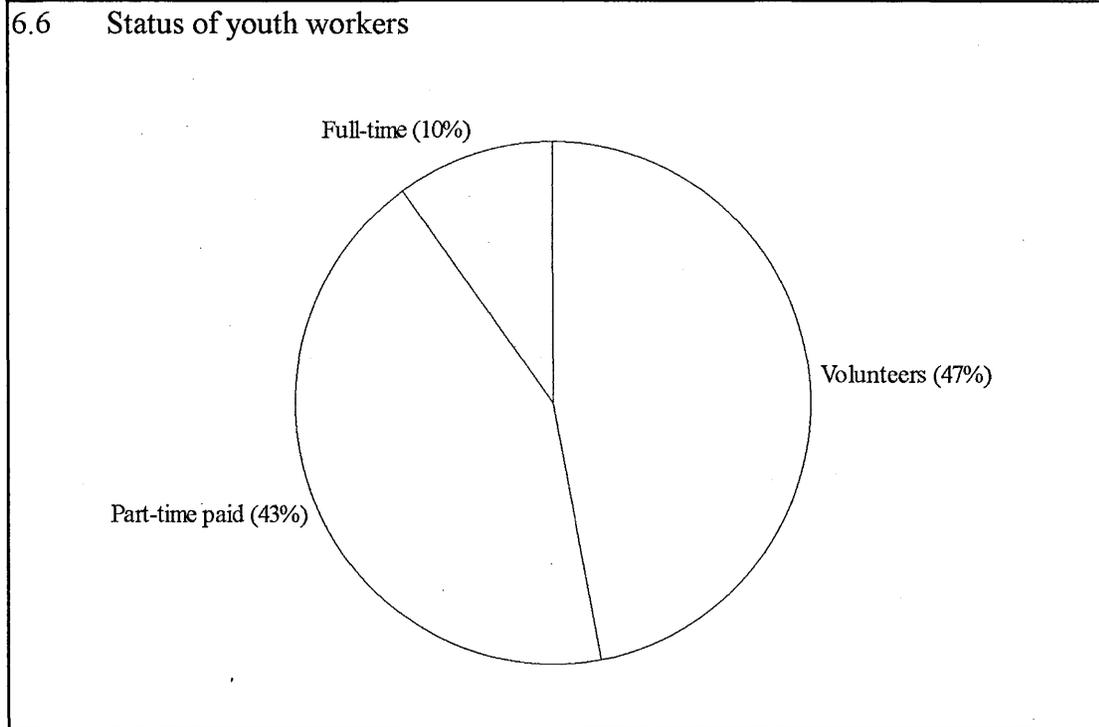
The Youth Work Initiatives

Some of these projects, more than others, were rooted in existing youth provision. The young people involved had experience of a particular youth organisation. In some cases this meant that the young people were active members of a youth club and this was the subject of their thoughts, discussions and other explorations. In others, the young people were outside youth provision but their views and experiences of youth work were nevertheless a feature.

Part of the Diss project looked at some of the characteristics of the youth club membership. The mean age of membership in the senior youth club was just over 14 years, with the boys being six months older, on average, than the girls. The mean length of their involvement, according to the accounts of the young people themselves, was just over two years. Over two thirds of the group had been involved in the youth club for less than two years. Six out of 29 members said their involvement spanned five years or more. Only one of these was female.

The Diss young people indicated, through their sociogram survey, that they associated the youth club people far more with 'having fun' and 'activities' than with 'sharing problems'.

6.7   Diss sociogram survey
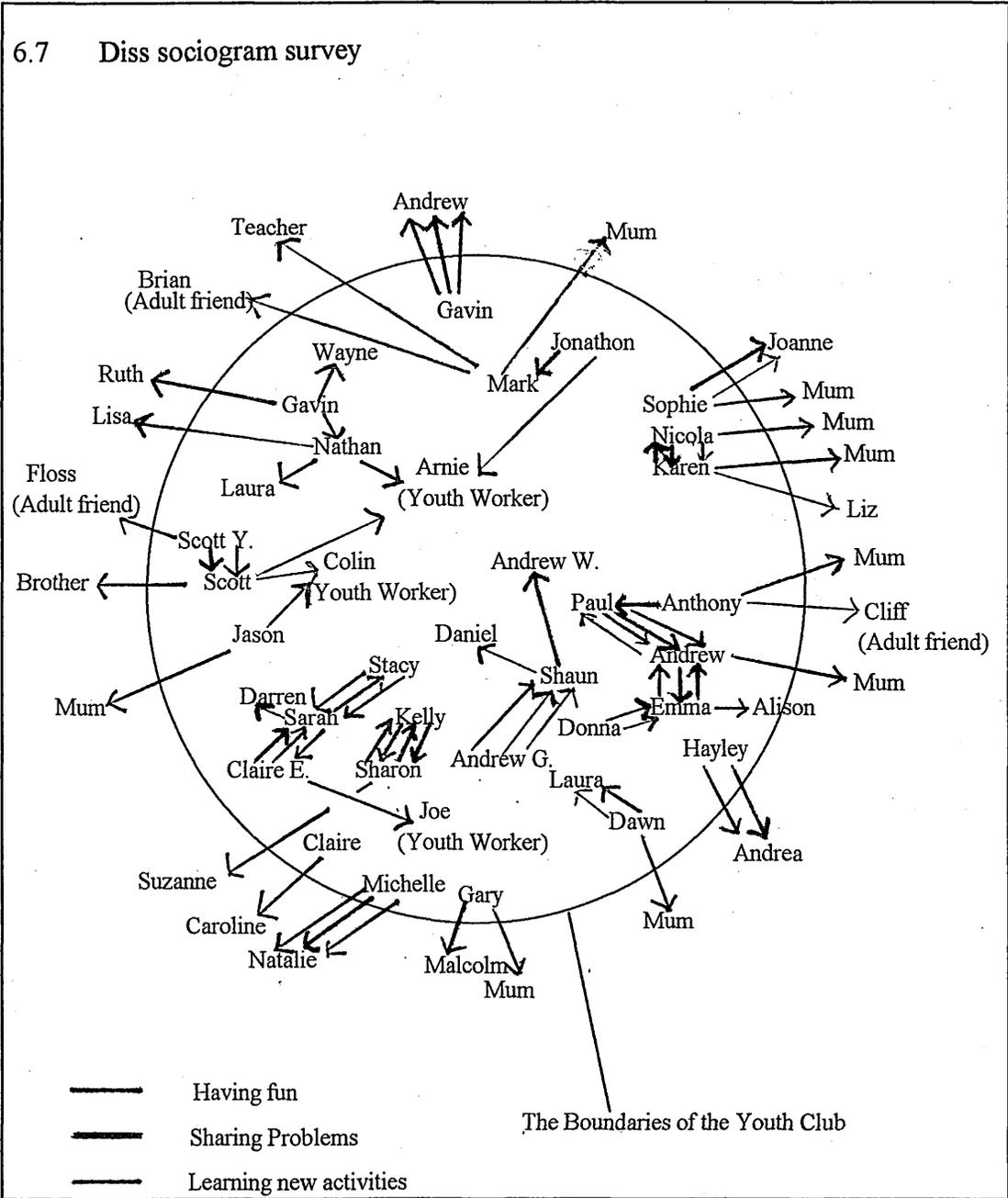
This was a point articulated clearly by the young people at King's Lynn youth club in the course of a group discussion with them. This latter group recognised that individual young people might choose to discuss a problem with a youth worker but

they wanted, in the main, to leave problems behind them when they came to the youth club.

Several of the groups attempted descriptions of their experiences of youth work. At Diss, the youth club members drew rings around descriptive words and expressions - as many as they wanted to, from a selection of 31. 'Fun', 'friendly', 'good', 'good for a laugh', 'enjoyable', and 'interesting' were selected by more than half of the members.

6.8 Diss youth club is: 29 members' views	
	No. of Young People saying 'Yes'
Fun	25
Friendly	21
Good	18
Good for a laugh	17
Enjoyable	16
Interesting	16
Lively	13
Noisy	12
Entertaining	11
Cheap	9
Action-packed	7
Brill	7
Exciting	7
Relaxing	5
Safe	5
Easy	4
Secure	4
Challenging	3
Mega-cool	3
Real	3
Crucial	2
The "in" place	2
Boring	1
Dead	1
Dreary	1
Dull	1
Scruffy	1

Well, they were almost bound to be the positive ones, since these were the young people who were choosing to be there on a fairly regular basis. Negative adjectives were selected but each one by only a few young people.

A strict statistical analysis would have been inappropriate because there were so few participants but at least five more boys than girls selected 'noisy', 'entertaining', 'action-packed' and 'brill' to describe the youth club. The selections made by the girls were more diverse. Using the same "rule of thumb", the younger ones more often used 'entertaining', 'action-packed' and 'brill', whereas the older ones chose 'cheap'. The perspectives of boys and of girls, of the younger ones and of the older ones were different possibly because their other experiences were different. It also makes sense that the young people selected the descriptions which highlighted those aspects of the youth club which were important to them. Thus the boys and the younger ones sought action and excitement and the older ones sought economy. The girls gave few clues, perhaps because the descriptions offered did not reflect their aspirations so they chose diversely from a "bad bunch" or perhaps what was important to them was genuinely more diverse or more difficult for them to articulate.

The Hethersett young people were asked, during the course of a group discussion, what they had liked best about their youth club in preceding months. Off-site activities - canoeing, ten-pin bowling, a beach barbecue - came at the top of their list. They found it very difficult to say why they had enjoyed these events so much but they were able to pick out one or two aspects of them which, on reflection, were common. They enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and equally important to some was the opportunity to meet people they already knew, for example from school, but in a different context. This perhaps introduced the possibilities of allowing people to see them in a different way (out of school uniform, amongst friends, in a social setting), of eliminating the barriers to friendship of other circumstances (school year groups, streams, bands, sets), of, in these respects at least, shifting the balance of power.

The King's Lynn young people were asked, in the course of their discussion, to think of the most enjoyable experience they had had at the youth club in the last year. There were four responses: an inter-club adventure/survival weekend; 'Love Bites', a

participatory drama about AIDS which young people from King's Lynn youth club had attended at another youth club (see Frankham and Stronach, 1990); the night the youth club coffee bar opened; an inter-club netball tournament. These young people had less difficulty in knowing why these activities were memorable. They had enjoyed meeting new people. They had felt good when they succeeded at challenging activities. They had benefited from being able to discuss AIDS and related issues with people who did not know them and so could not expect them to behave in particular ways or read anything into their questions or comments. It gave them the chance to present a more serious side of themselves than they were able to in their own familiar youth club or school setting.

At Shrublands, 12 young people recalled youth club critical incidents prompted by starter phrases, like a time 'I decided to get involved in something', 'I learned about my strengths or weaknesses', 'I took responsibility' and 'I made a decision'. The stories recounted included membership of the youth and community centre management committee, organising a visit to another youth club, organising a fashion show, undertaking a project to involve people with learning difficulties in the youth club, a football game, developing a youth club golf course and a debate about drugs. The analysis of the young people's stories sought to draw out what the young people thought were the benefits to themselves of their experience of youth work.

The first group of benefits is concerned with people and relationships. Participation in the management committee, had enabled Amy to form relationships, based on equality, with adults previously known only in positions of authority (a local councillor, a head teacher); she felt this had added a new dimension to her social network. Edward, who made signs at work for the golf course, with the permission of his employer, had enjoyed being the lynch-pin between two organisations, the youth club and his work-place, two previously unconnected spheres of his life. Several of the young people said they enjoyed working co-operatively in groups. The footballer talked about team-work and his need, now met, to share his enthusiasm with others.

Gary felt that he had found, at the youth club, people with similar interests to himself, a comfortable niche in his life.

The second group of benefits is concerned with the young people's self-esteem. Feeling a sense of achievement and being able to take responsibility were mentioned by two of the young people. Amy talked about her new-found confidence to express her ignorance in the knowledge that she would be treated with respect. Mark recorded that his opinion of himself improved when he over-came, during a youth club project, a deep-rooted fear.

The final group of benefits surround the idea of learning. Some of those who had talked about team-work had acquired an understanding of the potential for conflict between the interests of the individual and of the group. Amy had learned that understanding can counteract boredom and she had learned something about the process of management.. Stephanie had found things out for herself, at her own pace, and had developed her imagination. Victoria felt she had been given the stimulus to develop her own ideas. Mark felt he had absorbed factual information and developed a relationship which had changed his attitudes. Lisa felt she had analysed a problem and devised strategies to overcome it.

Three of the five Hellesdon young women, not currently attached to any youth organisation, had previous experience of three different youth groups. Two of them had been occasional attenders at a local youth club, where they described the activities on offer as pool, darts, table-tennis, listening to music, sitting about, using the coffee bar. They said that there was not enough to do and it was not interesting. When requested they guessed at its purpose - keeping young people off the streets, while making the point that it was not open very often, probably one night a week and not in school holidays. Rachael had more positive recollections of a girls group, advertised through school, which ran for about ten weeks only, offering a different activity, for example self-defence, each week.

Justina had been a regular member of a church youth club whose main activities, she said, were watching television, playing pool and the occasional outing, all of which she thought was boring. She expressed some enthusiasm for a sponsored run she had undertaken with another youth club member, to raise money for charity. She said she had done most of the organising herself, probably could have organised it without the youth club and used this as further ammunition with which to strike the youth club down. Her most memorable experience with her youth club, arguably the one from which she had gained most, devalued rather than enhanced youth work for her, because she had not been enabled to understand that the process is important.

The Hethersett young people talked also about the things they liked least in their youth club. There was reciprocal animosity between older ones and younger ones. Further discussion of this issue, in which a group of 13 and 14 year olds negotiated an age range of 13 to 15 years, indicated that they wanted a lower age limit as a mark of maturity and an upper age limit to preserve their security. The young people disliked, more than anything, the club rule of not being allowed outside the building during a club session. They indicated no understanding of the safety motive for this. Rather they interpreted it as an unnecessary restriction which reflected the lack of trust placed in them, a phenomenon they found both hurtful and embarrassing. They objected strongly to a recent rise in subscriptions without any understanding of the reasons for it. They said they 'hated it' on the occasions that there was insufficient to do and they felt bored.

In contrast to the lack of understanding demonstrated by the Hellesdon unattached group and the Hethersett groups, the Loddon youth club members indicated quite a good understanding of the place of the youth club within NYCS, of NYCS within the Education Department and of aspects of the NYCS county curriculum (foreign exchanges, county events, residential experiences) in which the role of their own youth club was limited. This broader understanding was rather better amongst the boys than the girls.

Two youth clubs considered the reasons their members came to the youth club. At Diss, the most frequently selected reasons, by more than half of the membership, were:

> *My friends come here,*
>
> *No-one forces you to do anything,*
>
> *I can meet boys/girls,*
>
> *I can get involved in activities.*

More than a third said:

> *I can make new friends,*
>
> *Nothing else to do,*
>
> *I can meet people I can't meet at school or at work.*

Interestingly, seven boys and no girls selected the reason,

> *I can find out what is going on.*

The younger ones were more inclined to select the friendship and activities reasons, but more of the older ones selected,

> *The adults really listen to what I say.*

The Loddon young people gave their reasons for coming to the youth club as being concerned with friendship and meeting new people, cost, activities and atmosphere.

Three groups of young people, not committed to youth provision gave their reasons for attending and not attending youth provision. The Hellesdon young women said their past attendance depended on whether the doors were open when they were passing. The school foyer survey at Costessey revealed a range of reasons for not attending the youth club. Excluding distance from home, the only agreement concerned 'money' and 'parents'. Some of these young people said there was nothing wrong with the youth club, but they simply did not choose to attend 'week in and week out'.

The outreach survey undertaken by young people at King's Lynn found that most young people knew where the youth club was but they thought it was more

expensive than it was. Most of them had formed an impression of what went on there but this was only partly accurate. Their main reasons for not attending, excluding distance from home, were that they thought it would be boring, homework and friendship reasons.

The Survey of Young People through Young People

It was possible to explore more systematically the involvement of young people in youth organisations, in the survey of young people. Seventy two percent of the sample said they had been involved in a youth organisation of one sort or another, so a quarter or so said they had never been. The method of selecting respondents may have over sampled young people connected with youth organisations, but it seems likely that a large number of young people are involved in youth provision at one time or another in their lives (see Garrett, 1986).

Half (48%) were still involved at the time of the survey; the proportion dropped as their age rose from 61% of the 14 year olds to 42% of the 18 and 19 year olds. From their recollections it seems that a third were involved at age twelve, and that 14 to 15 was the peak; by the 15th birthday, about one in ten had already dropped out, but a similar proportion had yet to join. Those never involved in any kind of youth organisation is thus approaching 20%.

Half of those who had been involved recorded only one type of involvement, a further quarter involvement in two types and the remainder in more. Multiple involvement most often reflected the inclusion of school clubs, sports clubs and voluntary work.

6.9   The percentage of young people involved in youth provision

Ages in years

6.10   The ages at which young people had joined (their first)
        youth provision: the cumulative pattern

Ages in years
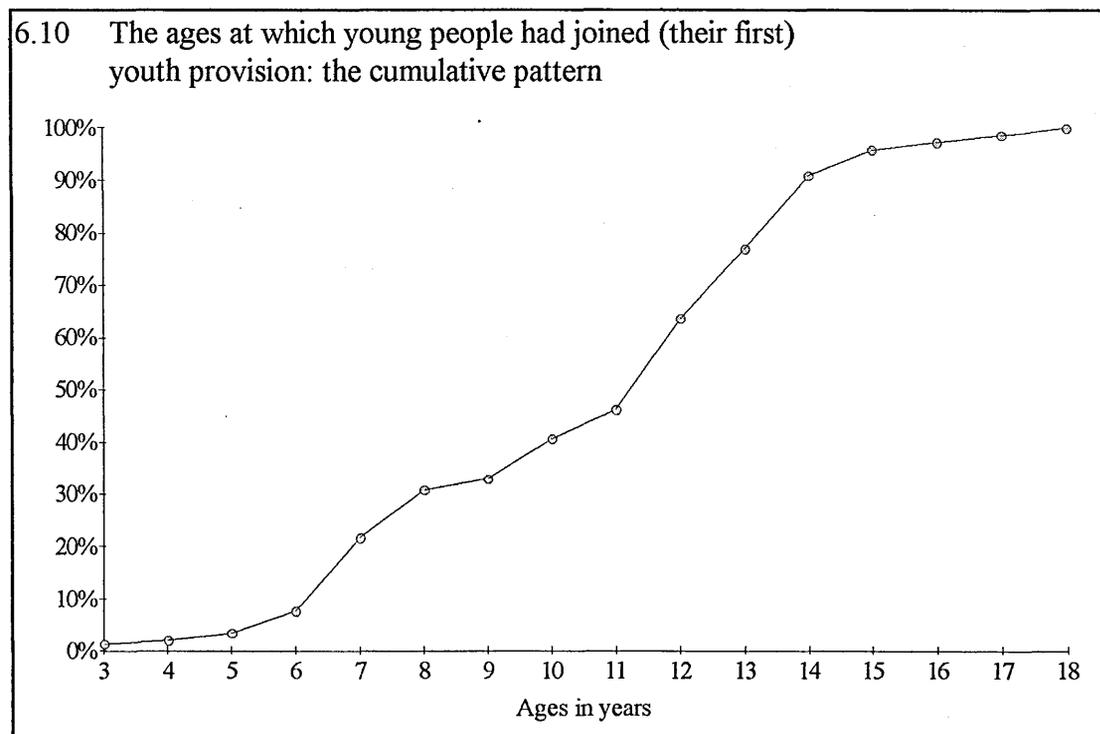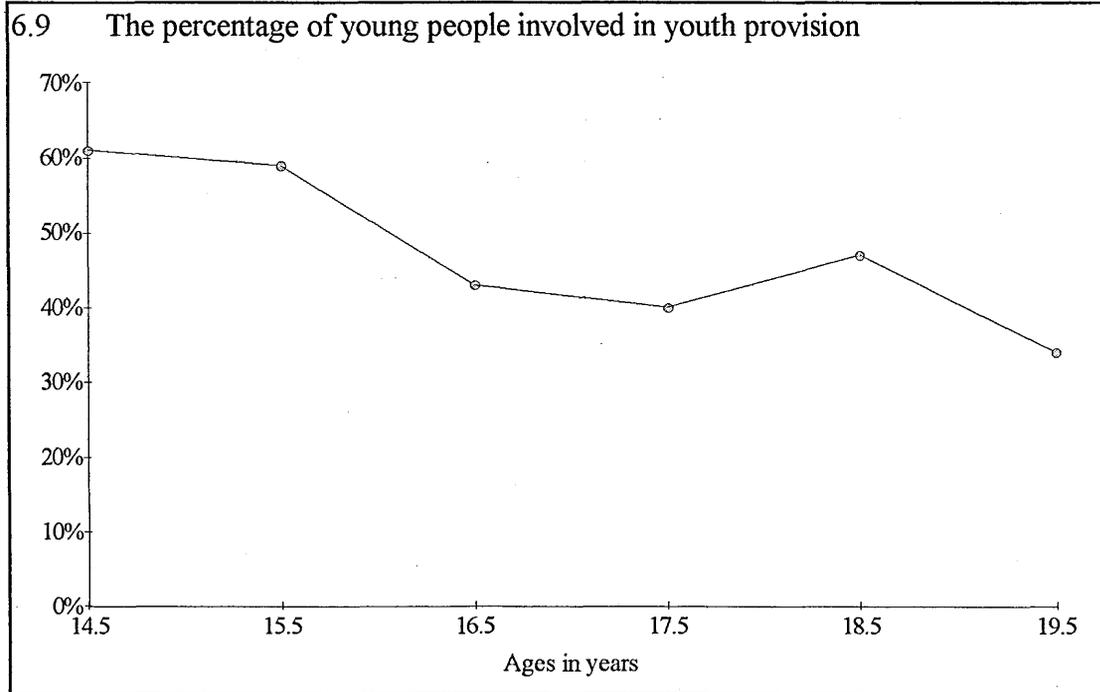
6.11   Of the young people who had joined and left youth provision:
       the ages at which they had left

Ages in years
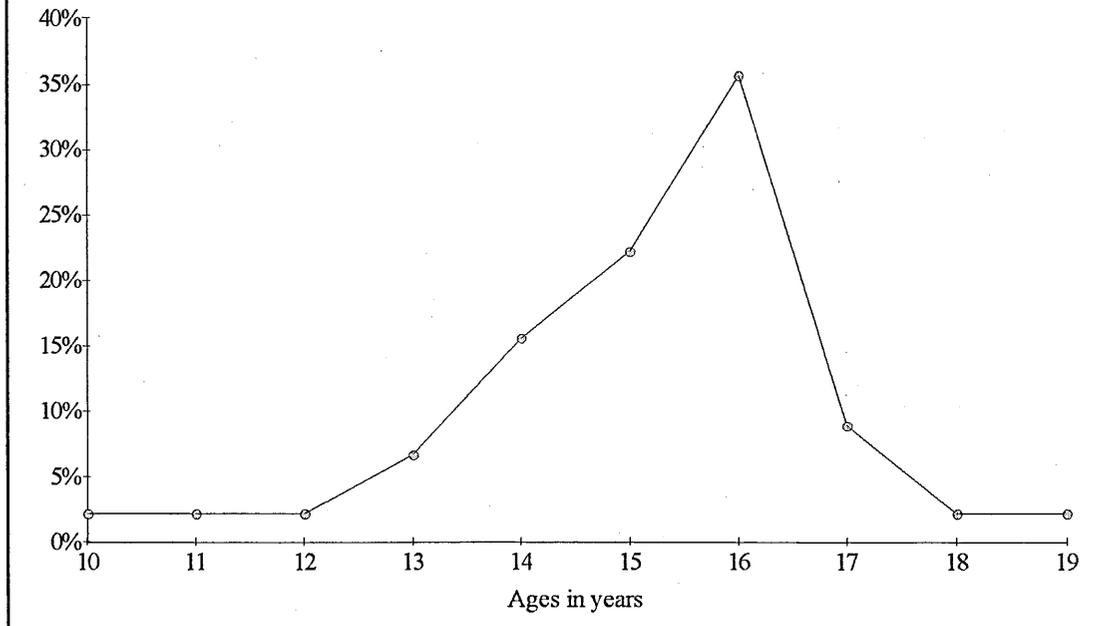
Youth clubs were mentioned most frequently - by two thirds of them, which is half the entire sample. There were no differences between the ages, gender, occupation and locality of the young people and the types of organisation to which they had belonged, except that those in work were more often involved with commercial outlets. This is clearly related to both their age and income.

6.12 The types of organisation in which young people had been involved
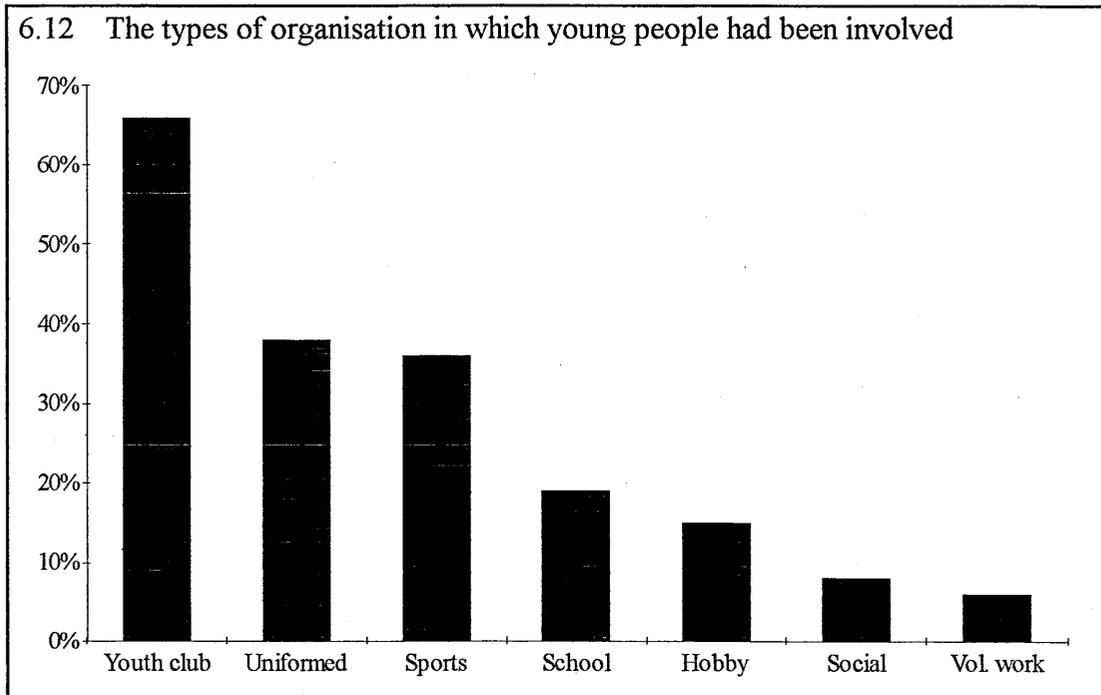
Learning about Youth Work from Youth Provision

Only half of the respondents in the survey of youth workers' views perceived, as a first loyalty, their organisations to be part of NYCS. Some perceived them to be part of other organisations, the largest of the other categories being churches. These excepted, comparatively few perceived any kind of national or other, broader affinity. This raises the old question of whether or not the range of statutory and voluntary organisations working with young people can legitimately be regarded as parts of any kind of a whole. Some units are operating in isolation, some operate in tandem with others and some are the points of connection in more complex networks. There are implications for the extent to which it is possible to direct, or even influence, the type of work in which the organisations are engaged. Some organisations are ignorant of external forces, some adhere to one source or another and some steer a path influenced by several. The power of the Local Authority Youth Service is strictly limited.

Youth work is an unwieldy body in another important respect. No more than 10% of its work-force, in Norfolk at least, is full-time and professionally trained. The

remainder is approximately half part-time paid and half voluntary. There is thus little control in respect of recruitment and selection, continuity of service and staff development. It is even difficult, at any one moment in time, to identify with certainty, the members of the work-force because of the ebb and flow of volunteers especially, in and out of youth work. Were it possible to achieve such an identification, it would be incorrect within days. Managers in NYCS were thus unaware, until this survey, of the age and gender of youth workers in the county, except in the case of the full-time youth workers. They are inevitably unaware of other characteristics, of strengths and of weaknesses, of youth workers, except from informally gathered information. Thus a Local Authority attempts to deliver a service to young people with what is essentially a casual labour-force. The work-force has been said to be the major resource of youth work, next to the young people themselves, but its quantity and its qualities are something of a mystery to many managers.

The youth clubs were mainly catering for young people below the age of statutory school leaving, more boys than girls, with the boys about six months, on average, older than the girls. As many as 80% of young people have some contact with youth organisations, at some point in their lives, quantifying "the unattached" as some 20%. The duration of involvement is likely to be not much more than two years, although the boys probably retain involvement longer than the girls. Most youth clubs meet only once a week and they often do not meet during holiday periods, thus the actual youth work contact period for most of the involved young people is probably no more than about 80 youth work sessions (mornings, afternoons or evenings), the equivalent of eight weeks at school. This is the time resource which is currently available to youth work in which to influence the lives of young people. It is, for most young people, a diluted time period, in which youth work is interspersed with 19 or 20 sessions of other commitments - formal education, employment, recreation, domestic responsibilities and so on.

Young people's involvement is retained, albeit for a limited time period, by young people's desire to meet existing friends, to make new friends, to explore potential partnerships and to meet people from other walks of their lives in a setting in which they have some power. They want to be somewhere where there is plenty going on but no-one is forced to take part. The interest of some of them is maintained by the activities offered. The boys especially like to find out and know what is going on. The older ones appreciate being listened to by the adults in youth clubs.

Youth groups respond to what are perceived by youth workers as majority concerns - to meet one another and to engage in sports and leisure activities. Young people associate youth clubs with social and recreational activities, certainly not with problems nor with problem-solving. Action and entertainment are important features for the boys and for the younger ones, while economy is an important consideration for the older ones.

The youth workers also said that they respond to the more problem-oriented concerns of minority groups. In articulating the strengths of the Youth Service, providing friendly adults was listed alongside meeting friends and sports/leisure, although the former was perceived as a minority concern.

Young people seemed to be saying that their positive experiences of youth work were concerned with meeting people, with making connections in their social worlds, with providing a comfortable niche and with co-operating with one another. Youth work seems to have been good, at least some of the time, in shifting the balance of power and achieving equality, of allowing young people to change and in letting them know when they have been successful. Young people said they had learned about themselves, about others and the relationships between themselves and others. A few had experienced intellectual development and a few recognised that their attitudes had changed.

The weaknesses of the Service were, according to youth workers, facilitating participation, arts experiences and responding to wider environmental issues. Young

people's contributions support at least the former. Several groups of young people had no understanding of what was being done to them in the name of youth work. Thus they had no understanding of what their subscriptions were for, why the programme was as it was and the role of the adults in the youth club; they were critical of adults who allowed them to do things for themselves. The same service which was providing fulfilling experiences at one end of the scale was causing frustration, hurt and embarrassment at the other.

Girls and young women in youth clubs are fewer in number than boys and young men. They leave when they are younger, retaining their involvement for a shorter period of time. They are less like one another in their reasons for coming to youth clubs and in the features they select as important to them. It is possible that they are confused by the mixed messages they receive, in youth clubs and between the youth service and other parts of their lives, about their sexuality and their femininity (see Spence, 1990). It is less clear what, if anything, girls want from youth clubs and why those who are involved retain their involvement. What is clear is that the needs of girls are less well served by youth clubs.

Young people outside youth clubs have an impression of what they are and what goes on there, presumably from personal experience, from second-hand experience and from their general knowledge of society and their community. The impression is likely to be accurate, only in part, particularly in respect of the cost of attending; they probably think it is more expensive than it is. One reason for not going to the youth club is the same as one reason for going - friendship. Other reasons concern the perceived activities of the youth club, homework (perhaps these were young people who prioritised their homework) and occasionally parents, who presumably have some sort of negative image of the youth club or its perceived membership

CHAPTER SEVEN

YOUTH WORK PROCESS

The data grouped in previous chapters suggests a massive range of types of provision and issues important for particular groups of young people. Little has so far been said about the way in which provision and curriculum issues should be approached. The survey of youth workers' views concentrated entirely on the "what" rather than the "how" question. The youth work initiatives, while not providing comprehensive material on how youth work takes place, illuminate, through their weaknesses and through their strengths, some aspects of the youth work process.

The survey through young people approached the youth work process question from a different angle. It sought to find out about the ways in which young people achieve informal learning and the ways in which they resolve problems. These activities reflect at least two of youth work's potential functions. So it sought to address the "how" question of youth work by uncovering these processes in young people's lives.

The Youth Work Initiatives

The Pitfalls of Action Research as Problems for Youth Work

Some of the pitfalls of this action research, detailed in Chapter Four, were equally damaging to the youth work process.

Clearly youth workers' interest and their contact with young people are pre-requisites for youth project work. If there was no interest or there was no contact with young people then there was neither research nor youth work.

The unreliable and inaccessible resources which caused loss of momentum to the video project at Hellesdon were as damaging to the youth work as to the research processes.

This youth work initiative was further negatively influenced by the Youth and Community Centre management committee's monolithic decision to collect subscriptions termly rather than weekly.

Another problem encountered first as a barrier to action research and reflected here in relation to youth work itself, is the time issue. Some of the youth clubs had such action-packed programmes, that youth workers were unable to find time to plan and time to implement pieces of project work. Balancing the requirement to be responsive with demands for pro-active, sometimes for visible manifestations of, youth work is a dilemma.

Like the break in contact between youth worker and young people caused by staff holidays and commitments beyond their neighbourhoods, this is an indicator of a more profound unease between the Youth Service as a formal organisation and the lives of young people. Another illustration of poor fit between organisation and community occurred over inconsistent staffing levels, again at Hellesdon, preventing the youth worker from undertaking project work with a group of young people, as arranged.

There is a degree of discomfort, lack of fit, about this imposition of organisation on community. Managing the equilibrium between organisation and community is thus a necessity.

There were respects in which the problems of research emerged differently as problems for youth work. That is, there were different representations of similar phenomena, for example, with respect to youth workers' skills and attitudes. Most of the youth workers, most of the time, ran youth clubs. They were "approachable organisers". So some of them did not have the skill to elicit young people's co-operation in, for example, the youth forum at Attleborough. All of the groups within the forum functioned effectively with the exception of one, which did not function, except with particularly co-operative young people in it. This resulted in a quite significant change of plan in which most competent youth workers were assigned to

most unco-operative young people and vice versa, rather than all young people and all youth workers meeting one another for different aspects of the discussion.

Some youth workers were experts in delivering, without prompting, the old palliatives. 'The numbers are low tonight - it's the fine weather!' 'The age range was low, 14 to 15 years, when you visited, but it is now 16 to 17 years.' ' We have almost as many female as male youth club members.' 'It is good if the young people do not recognise that they are being educated. A symbol of the success of the youth club! We can do it without them noticing.' 'The young people won't tell you that they turn to us for help, but they do.' Acceptance of these glib explanations mitigates against critical practice.

Some youth workers perceived engagement with the research project as a means of producing proof that their club was in need of more resources, especially items of equipment that were already at the top of their shopping lists. An eye to the main chance was another characteristic attitude! This is a way of assessing, but not evaluating, own performance, in terms of the visible resources acquired rather than in terms of young people's experience.

Youth Project Work Problems

Two items emerged as more significant problems for youth work than for research, at least in this context.

Two projects found it difficult to maintain the interest of the young people. One of these was the enquiry into young people's feelings about a whole range of environmental issues. It was not unlike a school project, in that it involved acquiring information from a range of sources, digesting the information, seeking the views of other members of the community, considering own practices in the light of knowledge and attitudes acquired and finally making a presentation. This project with the intermediate youth club at Costessey was initiated by a part-time youth worker and it caught the enthusiasm of the young people such that they wanted to explore the issues

in a depth not anticipated by the youth worker, but she encouraged them. Some of the tasks the young people undertook, like making contact with detergent industries and with organic vegetable growers, comparing one product against another and surveying the views of parents, were prolonged. The young people were not adequately prepared for the longevity of commitment such a venture required. By the time the presentation took place, about five months after the inception of the project, when local dignitaries and members of the community were invited to the exhibition which was the tangible product of the project, only one of the young people who had been involved in it, was still sufficiently interested to be present. There would perhaps have been a few more, had the presentation not been planned for the evening of St. Valentine's Day, when it is likely that there were other community events for teenagers representing competition for the young people's attention, but the young person who was there was clear that there had been a loss of interest on the part of almost everyone who had participated. So in this instance the project planned had been too long, in terms of weeks and months, for there to be a complete and tidy end.

The other project which found difficulty in maintaining the interest of the young people was the Hellesdon video project, another project in which the idea was presented to the young people by a part-time youth worker. He was particularly interested in the use of arts media in youth work and was skilled in the use of video. The way in which the young people's interest was developed, maintained and lost cannot be viewed in a vacuum because sessions planned were disrupted and re-arranged on several occasions, of which more later. The youth worker, nevertheless, found that the concentration of the members of the group never lasted beyond twenty minutes or so and this time period was insufficient to 'warm up' to the task (and this group was grappling with conceptually complex ideas around what the young people used to want, want now and want in the future from life and from the Youth Service), make progress from the last session and mark down the progress for next time's

starting point. In this instance, the length of sessions necessary to complete the task, were too long for the young people.

The youth worker at Hellesdon attributed what he perceived as the lack of success of this venture for these young people to a number of factors. One of these was the nature of the open youth club and its unsuitability for project work. He found it an unsupportive environment because of expectations by other staff and by youth club members that he would be able to continue to fulfil the diverse roles of the youth worker in the youth club - policeman, bouncer, counsellor, organiser. This was surprising to him, since he had negotiated, with colleagues, the time to spend on the project. He found out, too late, that their agreement had not been based on understanding and acceptance of the likely implications.

The young people, both those directly involved in the project and other club members, had expectations of one another and their roles at the youth club with which the video project interfered and they had expectations of what was offered at the youth club - pool, table-tennis, coffee bar, youth workers to talk to or to "wind up" - which were not met by the video project.

Two other youth clubs, Hethersett and Loddon, similarly found themselves to be victims of their own traditions. At Hethersett, volunteer youth workers found that they had unwittingly created a "young person as consumer" ethos. Facilities, activities, outings and tuck shop were laid on by adults. Young people understood implicitly that they purchased these with their weekly subscriptions. They consequently complained when they were dissatisfied. After receiving an introduction to participative youth work techniques at a research project workshop, one of the youth workers started to ask young people for their contributions to the programme, but they regarded this as a favour which they could either give or withhold and which was withheld when they were dissatisfied with other decisions which affected them. These young people had no understanding of what he was hoping they would get out of their experience. They were confused by what they perceived as friendly overtures combined with imposed

decisions about such items as the rate of subscription and whether or not young people were allowed to flow in and out of the building during a session. Youth workers themselves had little understanding of the balance of power in youth work settings - that they were retaining it, that it was possible to relinquish it. Confusion amongst some young people fuelled suspicion about the motives of the volunteer youth workers.

At Loddon, youth workers made several attempts at getting at youth club members' views of the youth club and at their understanding of the organisation. The first attempts provided the members with anonymity. There was, for example, a "wishing well" into which young people could put their comments on current provision and their hopes for the future. The full-time youth worker reported that this facility was wildly abused, with young people taking the opportunity to write profanities and thinly veiled innuendos. The youth workers thus finally resorted to a survey of views collected via a structured interview schedule, administered by youth workers. There is nothing conclusive here about why the young people did not take seriously the early attempts to elicit their views. Perhaps they were unused to being asked for them, perhaps they were unused to being taken seriously, perhaps they were unused to the protection from authority (youth workers) which anonymity provided.

The Hellesdon unattached group made some suggestions for reaching young people which represent a comment on the traditional ways of doing things in the Youth Service. These young women were, in many ways, self-sufficient and at first felt that their jobs and the money they earned provided them with everything they wanted, but on reflection came up with one or two potential roles for youth work from which they felt they would benefit. One or two of these functions were already functions of NYCS and/or of voluntary organisations. Since the young women were not involved in any kind of organised youth work, nor were they at school or at college and were spending their leisure time at home and in mainly adult environments, they were asked how they might be contacted. They suggested mail-shots, for at least a period of time

after school leaving and said that they usually read information which arrives by post or which comes through the letter-box. They suggested information slots on local commercial radio and advertisements in the "what's on" section of the local newspaper. This represents a serious challenge to the usual contact methods of youth work in general and of NYCS in particular.

Problems for Research but Positives for Youth Work

There were instances where an approach was a problem in one respect while it was an asset in another and there were many examples of good practice, where the self-same problems experienced in some pieces of work, were neatly side-stepped in others.

The youth work initiatives refreshingly revealed a spread of attitudes amongst youth workers towards youth work. The full-time youth worker at Downham Market, adopted a consciously blinkered approach to her work. Her refusal to be influenced was her mechanism to prevent diversion from her perceptions of her task; thus she would co-operate with anything which did not divert her from her youth work plans and with nothing that would. This ruthlessness of intent made it difficult to introduce items to the youth work agenda, but it got the job done. It was she, who said of the questionnaire in the survey of youth workers' views, 'I think this research is a waste of money when we need more resources for youth work, but those questions you asked, really made me think!'

Another demonstration of determination and persistence was given at Attleborough. Realising that the success of the youth forum venture depended on involvement by all of the youth workers, the part-time youth worker who took responsibility for the project, knew that it was necessary to consult each and every one of them beforehand. She was unable to gather all of the part-time paid and voluntary workers together so she discussed the project with all six of them individually. It took

months to complete this part of the process, but her commitment to this was vital to the project.

There were a few examples of youth workers strongly taking young people's part as a result of their enquiries. At Hellesdon, the youth workers argued from young people's position over the change in the way subs. were to be collected. At King's Lynn, the outcomes revealed the young women's feelings of injustice over the way in which time in the sports hall was divided between the genders and changes were made as a consequence. At Costessey, practices regarding food and waste disposal changed following the "green project" and the workers tried to influence practices in NYCS and the County Council more generally. This approach sits uncomfortably next to the scientific notion of research as value free but was an integral feature of youth project work.

Where there was lack of interest in some projects, there was a wealth of interest in others. The DYCO at Belton and Bradwell was appointed well ahead of the completion of the youth and community centre there. He set about making contact with young people to find out their views to guide the service offered, from the outset. He would have done this whether or not the research project had been taking place. Unfortunately, in respect of systematic data collection, interest outweighed technique, but the youth worker made himself known to approximately 600 young people in the process.

Youth workers demonstrated their courage at several different levels. The "green project" at Costessey took off on the young people's enthusiasm. It developed far beyond the youth worker's initial expectations. Not knowing, at one stage, how she was going to support the young people, she nevertheless encouraged them and set about equipping herself and the youth club with the resources to follow through.

The full-time youth worker at Costessey used his involvement in the research project to talk to young people who were not participants at the youth and community centre. He asked them their view of the centre and what, if anything, was preventing

them from coming along. He was, in doing this, exposing his judgement, to all measure of criticism. He was making himself more vulnerable than he needed to, but he wanted to know and was willing to take the risk.

The 'Youth Matters' survey would have been more useful if the planning had been more competent, but the DYCO's willingness to ask for help, even at the stage when the data had been collected, enabled much material to be salvaged. He could have retained more credibility, perhaps, by discarding the venture, but the issue of personal pride either never arose or was overcome.

Strengths in Research and Youth Work Processes

Many of the youth work initiatives were creative in making contact with 'new' young people. The King's Lynn Outreach Survey obtained the views of the young people who were the friends and associates of the young people already known to the youth worker, through the known young people. The Hellesdon young women, who were not members of any organised youth provision, were contacted through one of the young women who was known to the research project because she was working as a clerical officer in the Education Department at County Hall. The willingness, creativity and capacity of youth workers to contact young people was an asset to both the youth work and research aspects of the project.

There was only the Hellesdon video project which used the opportunity to provide young people with a different way of telling their story. This dimension to the project made it over-ambitious and too difficult to complete but it was a creative idea which had the potential to provide young people with practical and political skill.

Where some youth workers had been unable to make the connection between the research project and particular groups of young people, it was done nowhere better than at Great Yarmouth. The youth worker was already in touch with a small group of young women with their own children, she had already become informally

aware of difficulties they were experiencing in respect of housing and so connected the two to good effect.

In the same project, where some of the young people were deeply troubled, it was necessary to shuffle the different items on the different agendas. The project was important for the young people because it was encouraging them to talk to one another, to discover common ground, to share experiences and feelings and ultimately to understand their individual and collective positions. The participants were also dealing with very pressing concerns relating to their physical safety, the health of their children, acquiring and maintaining homes and managing their poverty. So, items moved up and down the agenda according to the almost constant re-assessment of situation on the part of young women and youth worker. Awareness of this requirement, sensitivity to each of the items, the maintenance of each of them and flexibility of approach enabled the youth worker to manage effectively this persistently shifting agenda.

At Costessey, the young people's initial enthusiasm for their 'green project' took it into what were uncharted waters for the youth worker. She felt ill-equipped to work with them until a youth worker from a neighbouring club, who heard about the problem at a research project workshop, offered to help. This was these workers' first experience of trading skills, time, experience and one which both workers found useful.

The Survey of Young People through Young People

The survey sought to find out how young people learn and how they deal with the situations they find themselves in, beyond the confines of formal education and youth provision, as a means of pin-pointing at least some of the ingredients which would lead to successful youth work.

Dealing with Preoccupations

As part of the question in which young people were asked to think of a friend about the same age as themselves and to say what they felt occupied their thoughts, they were also asked to say how they thought the friend was dealing with the issue. Fewer young people answered this part of the question, with answers provided by almost half of the total sample. Of these, almost half (48%) were making some sort of independent and direct response to the issue of their concern. For example, if the friend was worried about failing school examinations, s/he was applying him/herself consciously to school work. If the friend was worried about money, s/he was arranging to earn some (or more) or to borrow. A third (34%) of the young people were accepting their fate and doing nothing about it, at least as far as the interviewee knew. Sixteen percent were talking to friends as a means of airing, sharing or relieving their feelings. Only 3% gave other responses, including seeking help from professionals and including talking to parents.

The interviewees may not have known very much about the other sources of help to which their friends turned but even so, independence from adults and the importance of friends as advisers and counsellors emerges strongly.

Learning Experiences

This enquiry employed critical incidents (Flanagan, 1951). The young people were asked to tell a story about something that had happened to them, outside school or college, in the last year or two. The young people were given a choice of starter phrases like 'a time you got involved' and 'a time you made a decision'. These were intended to guide the young people to recount critical incidents which reflect youth work's educational ambitions and from which youth work could learn. Four fifths of the total response was useful in the analysis.

Open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) was used, in the first instance, to put some boundaries around a range of categories. Axial coding (ibid.) was subsequently

employed to group the categories around themes which reflected different elements of either the learning process or the learning outcomes.

Outcomes were of two types. There was acquisition of social knowledge, awareness, familiarity as one type of outcome. There was personal change in respect of activity related knowledge and skills, social behaviour or attitudes as another. Thus it was possible for a young person to say they s/he learned something about him/herself, about others or about relationships or about the social world in general but that, in his/her own estimation s/he had not changed in any way or conversely that s/he had. The former is termed social awareness. The latter is called personal change.

Four aspects of social awareness were identified.

7.1   Social awareness outcomes
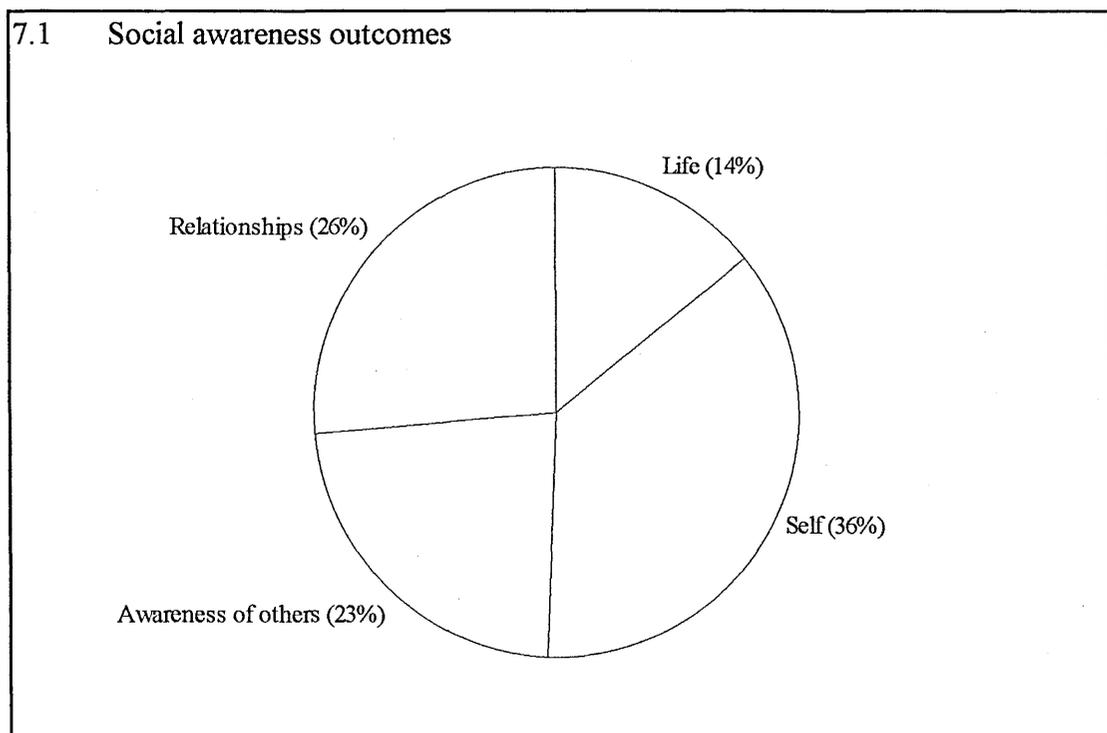
The largest category, 'self', includes notions of learning about own capabilities and attitudes. 'Relationships', the next largest, is concerned with becoming aware of their nature in general or the existence or nature of particular relationships, like a young person finding out how s/he feels about someone. 'Awareness of others' is concerned with the capabilities and attitudes of others in general and of others in particular. The

'life' category is concerned with social rules of, for example, morality and with a sense of the complexity of the social world.

Personal change outcomes were recorded in six categories. The confidence category reflects statements like, 'I was terrified that I would do something wrong ... but ... I think I could do it again now that my friend has trusted me once.' Confidence is a notion with which many of the young people were familiar and it was mentioned by name, by many of those whose stories are included here. 'He felt a bit more confident.' '[I have] become more confident speaking to people and meeting friends.' Responsibility and maturity too were attributes which young people gave the impression of recognising in themselves and of being comfortable about saying they had acquired them. 'I'm more responsible now. I think of others as well as myself.' 'I don't think I've changed apart from grown up a bit.' 'I felt betrayed ... [but] ... I'm more mature now.'

Classifying a story as reflecting a change in attitudes or beliefs was less straightforward. Few young people used these words. With the cynicism of adulthood, there is a sense that the young people's remarks grouped in this category were often more likely to be concerned with change rather than with transformation. 'I decided never to trust anyone again.' On the other hand, there were those which had a more profound feeling, even to a cynical adult. 'I learned not to get mixed up in anything to do with nearly married boys.' 'They [people] are not being nice to me because of my skin colour.'

The knowledge and skills category, located here in the personal change variable, is different from the learning about self, others and relationships in the social awareness or social knowledge variable, from which social skills, like communication and organisation were excluded. The knowledge and skills category is specifically concerned with learning something academic, technical or practical. The acquisition of social skills is included. 'She learned not to rush things [with reference to organising an event].' 'She learned to communicate better.'

Young people rarely mentioned independence by name. The type of recording which was included in this category was, 'I can make my own decisions now,' or 'After that I can cope on my own.'

Greater self-confidence emerged from over a quarter of the stories. The outcomes of the stories the young people told reflect quite well some of the desired outcomes of youth work in its informal education mode, so the elements of the process which produced the outcomes are important, with a view to re-creation or replication in youth work settings.

7.2   Personal change outcomes
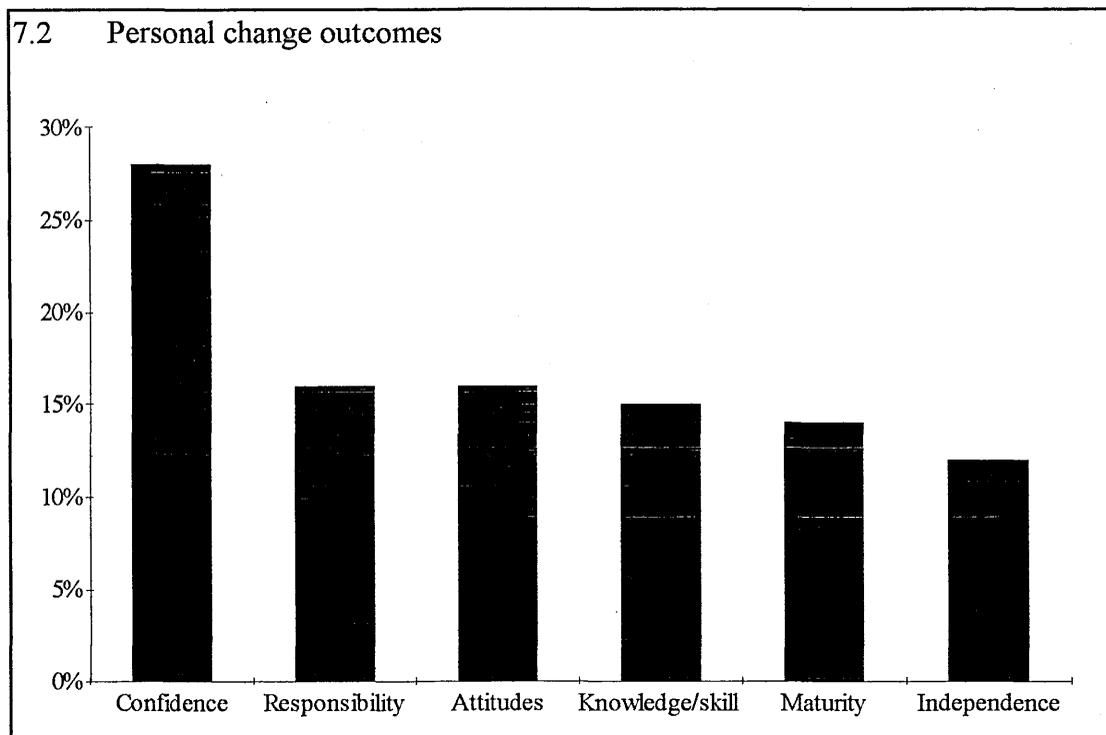
The process of informal learning was analysed on five separate counts. The first of these concerned the type of situation it was, how it had arisen. For almost half (45%) of the cases, the experience related to an ordinary event. This category included 'every day' activities like travelling to school and other usual experiences for the age group, like making decisions concerned with the transition from school to work or further education and with the starting and ending of relationships. More of the older than the younger half of the sample gave answers in this category (see figure 7.3).

Almost a third (33%) occurred as the result of a directly posed challenge. This was something that the young person knew, at the outset, was to be a potentially demanding experience, like being asked to take responsibility for something or deciding to do something which s/he had not done before. Just over a tenth (11%) came about as part of or subsequent to a disagreement, an argument or an estrangement.

7.3 The learning experience stimulus by age group (chi-squared test)			
	14 - 16 yrs. %	17-19 yrs. %	Significance Level
Every day or 'life stage'	33	52	
Directly posed challenge	36	30	
Disagreement	17	6	.0500

Four types of role played by the young people themselves were identified: initiate, respond, join, react. 'Initiate' was when the young person had been the driving force behind the incident; it was his/her own idea and s/he was more in control of it than anyone, like deciding to plan a holiday with a friend. 'Respond' was when someone else started the incident, but the young person made a conscious decision to be involved and his/her involvement was relied upon by one or more other people, like being asked to look after a neighbour's shop while the neighbour was ill or away from home. 'Join' was when the young person made a conscious decision to be involved, but the process of the incident was not dependent on his/her involvement, like a trip of a large number of people to the ice rink. The final category 'react' was when the young person had little time to think about his/her involvement and had little or no control over its direction, like an argument between two friends.

These categories form a sort of continuum which illustrates degrees of involvement.

7.4   Continuum of roles

Least   React Join Respond Initiate   Most
Involvment   Involvement
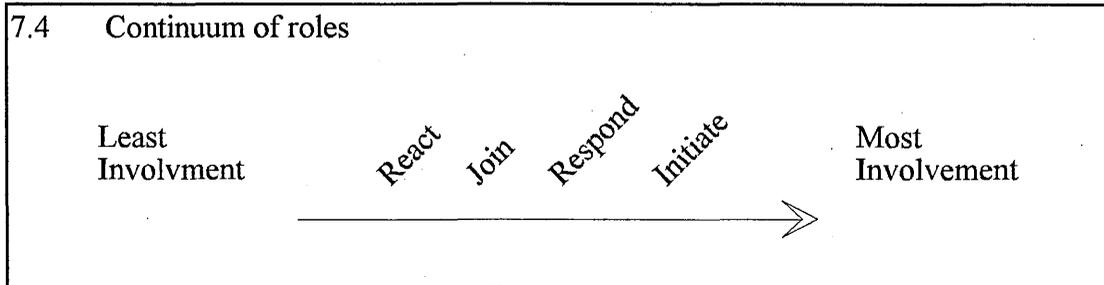
Of the 80% who mentioned their role, just over a third (37%) made a response. A third (33%) were initiators. A sixth (17%) reacted and a sixth (14%) joined.

7.5   The role of the young person in the learning situation

Join (14%)

Initiate (33%)

React (17%)

Respond (37%)
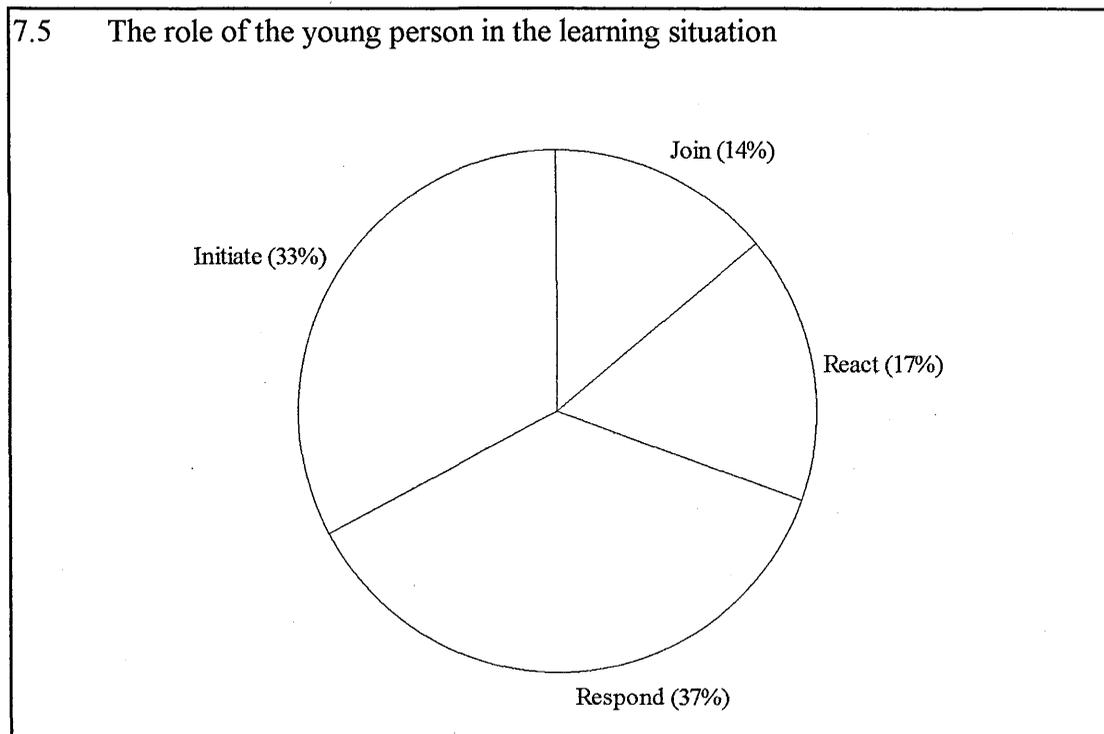
This confirms some of the messages of participatory youth work. Young people learn from the situations they initiate, from those in which they actively control their involvement and where the role they play is important to the life of the process or the group. The types of learning situation to which young people have access are varied and in some cases limited.

Most of the young people said who else was involved in their incidents. For two thirds, it was another young person, most often a friend; parents were sometimes mentioned.

7.6   Others involved in the learning situation
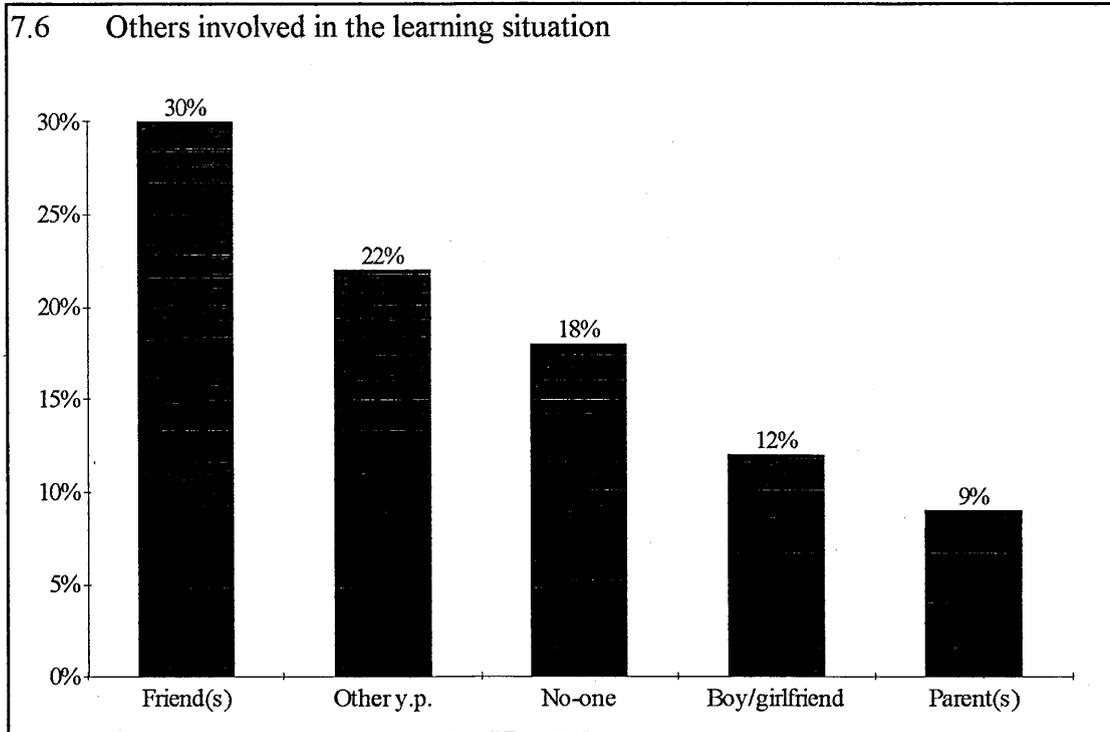
These accounts provide another glimpse at the importance of peers in the worlds of young people. A boy or girlfriend was a more frequent companion for the older young people, whilst other young people (not necessarily friends) were mentioned more by the younger half of the cohort.

The young people sometimes mentioned use of their skills or acquisition of new skills in the course of their incidents. Of these, four in ten referred to skills related specifically to an activity like canoeing or music (more boys than girls). A third referred to communication and committee skills, like organising and bargaining and a quarter or so referred to caring for people or animals (more girls than boys).

7.7 Type of skill by gender			
	Male %	Female %	Significance
Committee	31	33	
Activity	53	30	
Caring	17	37	.0654

Over half the sample said how they felt at the time of the experience recounted. The list of emotions was almost endless, so they were divided into simply two categories, positive and negative. Two thirds (66%) were positive. '[She was] over the moon.' 'She was pleased with the fact that she had managed well ...' '[She] felt very happy at the time.' '... she felt as though she had a complished [sic.] something ... ' '...felt chuffed ...' 'Felt it was a success.' Conversely, a third were broadly negative. 'I felt very uncomfortable.' 'I felt angry and upset.' '[I] felt dirty about [it]'

Evaluation of youth work in terms of enjoyment is common, "Everyone had a good time," and some would say too common. In light of this aspect of these research findings, that young people are twice as likely to experience informal learning from the situations in which they have positive feelings, perhaps enjoyment as criteria should not be dismissed too readily.

Learning about the Youth Work Process

Since the time resource available in which youth work can impact the lives of young people is limited, it is the responsibility of research to develop clarity of task. This piece of research goes some way towards this destination. It illustrates the importance of young people to one another in both the extent to which young people are aware of one another's preoccupations and in the part young people play in one another's learning experiences. Young people choose one another for company and they turn to one another for consolation, counsel and advice. There is perhaps a role for youth work in enabling young people to be good counsellors and advisers to one

another, in preference to specialist counselling and advice agencies, in which adults are the experts.

This piece of research identifies five common characteristics of the experiences from which young people achieved either social awareness or personal change. Insofar as these can be readily emulated in youth work settings, they are:

the presentation of direct challenges;

in which the part played by individual young people is vital to the task;

in the company of peers;

involving acquisition of new skills or recognition and use of existing ones;

which are enjoyable.

It is possible to learn about the potential of youth work from young people's lives and experiences, but it is also possible to identify the characteristics of youth work from observations of youth work itself, as the process outcomes from the youth work initiatives reveal.

Youth work involves contact between young people and youth worker. Youth workers employ diverse methods of reaching young people. It manages limited contact time carefully, maintaining the interest of the young people as paramount. Educational objectives are not employed as a hidden curriculum. Young people are encouraged to develop an understanding of workers' objectives.

Youth workers are not technical experts in relation to the equipment they may use. Momentum is an important feature. Assumption of responsibility for technical equipment is a diversion from the youth work task and is not a guarantee of smooth operation. Young people's expectations of the technical world are sophisticated and youth work which relies on technology for its momentum cannot survive on inaccessible, ill-maintained resources. Youth workers are facilitators and sometimes organisers but they do not instruct.

Youth work demands interest, enthusiasm, commitment and persistence from youth workers. It relies on their courage in taking calculated risks. It is concerned with a flexibility of approach which manages a changing agenda in terms of the issues which are important to and for particular groups of young people and which draws on the time, skills and experience of other adults as appropriate.

Youth work is about taking young people's part. Communities of interest within the age group are affected by decisions in which they have had little or no influence. One of the functions of youth work is to advocate on behalf of these young people and to enable young people to have their own say.

Youth work has a relationship with community. Some of the phenomena which influence the process are outside its domain, but it is a responsibility for youth work to be aware of local and more far reaching actions, to explore the possibilities for influence, to communicate actions and their implications. Youth work makes the connection between the large issues of community, society and organisation and the lives of particular groups of young people. There is an element of tension in the relationship for youth work is delivered through organisations which are more or less formal in their structure. This perpetuates a certain unease between the seamed organisation and the comparatively seamless lives of young people and communities.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE YOUTH WORK RELATIONSHIP

<u>**Youth Workers' Views**</u>

The first indication that the research had something to say about the relationship between young people and adults in general and youth workers in particular came with the analysis of the youth workers' survey which took place parallel with some of the youth work initiatives. These were starting to provide glimpses at the depth and breadth of youth work which seemed to have escaped the survey. The beginnings of this trail of thought were so small as to be almost un-noticeable.

There were, as detailed earlier, a few differences in the views of youth workers and the views of the young people themselves. The first of these was in respect of arts, music and cultural activities. Youth workers clearly said that these were relevant to a minority of young people, yet young people themselves were indicating a broader interest in the arts, especially in music; in the Belton and Bradwell survey, live music was the only activity to attract significant interest without significant disinterest. The second important issue of disagreement was that of boredom. Youth workers perceived boredom as the only 'problem issue' to directly affect a majority of young people. Young people themselves hardly mentioned boredom as an issue at all. When they did, it was to say that they disliked the feeling, not that it was common.

There were one or two other ways in which youth workers views' failed to strike a happy chord with me as a practitioner. For example, only 45% of youth workers perceived sexual abuse as a problem affecting even a minority: a further four percent perceived that it affected the majority. Fifty one percent ticked neither box to say, perhaps, that it affected no-one they knew or to say that they did not know the young people well enough to know whether or not they were affected. If they believed it to affect no-one they knew, their awareness of issues affecting young people left

something to be desired. If they did not know, it says something about the lack of depth of the youth work relationship.

Only 60% perceived that "their" young people were affected by unequal opportunities which reinforces the notions that the youth workers understanding of the issues or their relationships with young people or both were far from comprehensive.

Neither of these issues, which serve here as examples of others, figured in the list of concerns which youth workers said were the most important ones facing young people. This list reflected the tasks - of education to work, financial dependence to independence, finding a partner - which society has assigned to the life stage. Youth workers viewed few of the ills for which society rather than young people themselves are responsible as affecting a majority. They viewed all of the social problems as comparatively unimportant, although it is not possible to say whether the reason is concerned with the few who they perceived to be affected or because they viewed them as inevitably transient, alongside the life stage.

Youth workers views were more like the views of adults in general than the views of a workforce with a particular understanding of and familiarity, not to say empathy or even sympathy, with young people. These views seemed to be informed more by the popular media than by contact with young people.

Clearly, there was a range of view within the workforce and some of these views were closer to my own than others. The suggested and perceived concerns of the young people were cross-tabulated with the characteristics of the youth worker respondents with two interesting results. The first of these related to the age of the

youth worker. Younger workers perceived more concerns and issues as affecting

young people than did their older colleagues. This pattern emerged clearly with

respect to 16 issues of a potential 28.

8.1   The percentage of youth workers in each of three age groups
        by issues affecting a majority or a minority of young people

	Age groups of youth workers		
	30 and under %	31 - 45 %	46 and over %
Meeting friends	97	97	94
Meeting friendly adults	90	87	80
Pursuing projects	92	79	69
Difficulty with school/college work	87	87	74
Planning & managing own activities	87	83	67
Arts/music events & experiences	87	81	69
Contributing to the community	84	76	73
Problems at home	88	88	68
Transport/geographical isolation	88	66	54
Trouble at school	86	81	9
Misuse of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs	82	72	60
Poor relationships with peers	77	77	66
Anxiety about sex & sexuality	73	67	56
Early parent hood	55	54	40
Sexually transmitted diseases	50	50	40
At risk of sexual abuse	52	51	38

Younger workers perceived, more often than their older colleagues, the issues as affecting a majority rather than a minority of young people, in 12 out of the group of 28 issues.

8.2 The percentage of youth workers in each of three age groups by issues affecting a majority of young people			
	Age groups of youth workers		
	30 and under	31 - 45	46 and over
	%	%	%
Arts/music events & experiences	36	18	16
Planning & managing own activities	36	21	18
Pursuing projects	35	24	18
Getting & keeping a job	34	25	22
Misuse of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs	33	33	22
Problems at home	24	21	12
Trouble at school	19	13	8
Poor relationships with peers	19	13	8
Debt or financial hardship	18	11	6
Sexually transmitted diseases	13	11	8
Early parenthood	10	4	2
Trouble with the law	9	6	0

The second interesting outcome concerned the role of the worker in the service. Full-time workers recorded more concerns than did part-time workers who generally recorded more concerns than did volunteers. This pattern emerged with respect to 17 issues, out of 28.

8.3   The percentage of youth workers in three role categories
        by issues affecting a majority or a minority of young people

| | Youth workers' roles | | |
	Full-time %	Part-time %	Voluntary %
Meeting friends	100	96	96
Arts/music events & experiences	100	87	70
Planning & managing own activities	96	92	71
Problems at home	96	91	74
Misuse of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs	93	85	56
Meeting friendly adults	92	90	82
Pursuing projects	92	82	73
Trouble at school	88	88	71
Getting and keeping a job	88	82	56
Difficult transition to adulthood	85	81	66
Anxiety about sex & sexuality	85	80	66
Trouble with the law	85	78	53
Transport/geographical isolation	81	73	53
Debt or financial hardship	73	70	43
Gambling/gaming machine addiction	70	68	46
At risk of sexual abuse	70	55	40
Difficulties with accommodation	69	66	38

Full-time youth workers, more than their part-time colleagues, more than voluntary workers more often recorded issues as majority rather than minority concerns. This was true in 16 of 28 issues.

8.4   The percentage of youth workers in three role categories
        by issues affecting a majority of young people

	Youth workers' roles		
	Full-time %	Part-time %	Voluntary %
Meeting friends	96	92	90
Difficulties with accommodation	69	66	38
Misuse of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs	58	39	17
Difficult transition to adulthood	50	40	17
Anxiety about sex & sexuality	50	31	16
Meeting friendly adults	46	40	39
Transport/geographical isolation	46	33	18
Getting & keeping a job	46	31	19
Difficulties with school/college work	46	30	18
Unemployment	37	27	16
Unequal opportunities	35	23	8
Planning and managing own activities	31	28	19
Problems at home	27	25	13
At risk of sexual abuse	12	4	3
Debt or financial hardship	15	14	10
Trouble with the law	12	6	4

Younger workers and those with the greatest current time investment in youth work were perceiving more concerns with greater severity. One explanation for this could be that it was in the interests of those who depended on youth work for their full-time or, to a lesser extent, their part-time livelihoods to perceive a more troubled community of young people. Another explanation is that those with most training recognised or were more sensitive to the issues affecting young people but both of these fail to offer an explanation for the age part of the "equation".

Another explanation is that younger workers, closer to the young people in age were also, perhaps, closer in understanding. This is complemented by the idea that

those workers spending more time with young people were aware of more of their concerns and were aware of more of the direct effects. One voluntary youth worker, running a one evening a week youth club for young teenagers, returned his survey form, without completing it, saying, 'I don't know the children well enough to answer your questions.' His terminology convinces of the truth of his statement and he may have been speaking for many. In any event, it is further support to the latter of the explanations, although of course the options are not mutually exclusive.

The Youth Work Initiatives

A few of the youth work initiatives suggested tension in the relationship between young people and adults, although none of these had sought to explore it. The school foyer survey at Costessey gave the first clue when the young people in the discussion group said that what they wanted from the youth club was a place to meet 'away from parents and teachers'.

The Great Yarmouth young women's isolation was compounded by the discomfort they felt at the prospect of meeting regularly with other mothers, some of whom may have been little older than the young women themselves: they did not join "mothers and toddlers" groups and they did not make friends with neighbours. They felt themselves judged by women who appeared to be older, married and problem-free, even though one member of our group was aged 22 and another was married to the father of her children. These young women were, in the main, hostile towards social workers and health visitors: they felt as though their feelings and opinions were disregarded by them; they felt misunderstood and criticised by them.

The group discussion at Hethersett youth club revealed the young people's perceptions of their volunteer youth workers. There was suspicion about their motives and their intent in running the youth club. The young people considered the youth workers to be "power-hungry", people who liked shouting for the sake of it and oppressing people less powerful than themselves, who were, the club members. The

youth workers presented themselves as keen to provide somewhere for local young people to go and also keen, to get young people more involved in the running of the club.

So young people at the younger end of the spectrum wanted social space away from the adults that all of them knew - parents and teachers. They objected to the attitudes and the behaviour towards them of volunteer youth workers, retaining and utilising the power in the running of the youth club. The young women at the older end of the spectrum felt alienated from both other women and from the professionals who, they felt, might pass or had passed judgement upon them. This shaky image of young people at one with one another and at odds with adults emerged in the first half of 1990, when there was still the opportunity to pursue this and related ideas more directly, in other youth work initiatives.

A key feature of the Diss project was to find out what part the youth club people (members and workers) played in the lives of the young people, so they were individually asked three questions about this, amid other questions about their involvement in and their views of their youth club. The questions concerned which people the interviewees would choose to 'have fun' with, to 'learn a new activity' with and to 'share a problem' with. Only one of 29 young people chose a youth worker with whom to 'have fun'; five chose youth workers with whom to 'learn a new activity'; none chose youth workers with whom to 'share a problem'. For this latter purpose, only 11, just over a third of the young people in the youth club, chose an adult, and nine of these chose their mothers. So these young people perceived youth workers to be more appropriate companions for activities than for either of the other purposes suggested to them. Adults in general were significant only in respect of sharing a problem and non-family adults, youth workers included, were barely mentioned. The most frequently chosen companions were other young people for all three of the suggested activities. This is hardly conclusive but it does nothing to contradict the image already created.

Part of the Downham Market survey asked young people, all of whom knew several youth workers, how they thought a youth worker ought to behave, using semantic differential scales with opposites at the ends of the scales. Their view was that youth workers should be:

neither 'serious' nor 'not serious';

'not strict'.

They should:

'play safe' rather than 'take risks';

'listen' more than 'talk'.

They should strike a balance between:

behaving 'like teenagers' and 'like adults';

'organising' and 'enabling'.

They expressed preferences:

cautiously for youth workers to 'really know me' rather than 'keep

their distance';

strongly for youth workers to 'treat everyone the same' rather than be

'a special friend to me'.

Much of what is said here has the air of delicate equilibrium about it, requiring a strong degree of sensitivity on the part of the youth worker in respect of, for example, how well to get to know the young person, when to direct and when to facilitate, when to adopt a conventional adult role and when not.

However, the most illuminating of the youth work initiatives, with respect to the youth work relationship, was at Shrublands, Gorleston. This project, in which 12 young people recalled critical incidents of their involvement with the youth club, sought to explore the young people's experience of youth work in relation to the NYCS curriculum, then in draft format. It was important to find out whether the (mainly positive) experiences of the young people really needed a youth work intervention, or whether these learning experiences would have happened anyway.

Prompting the young people to provide information on this, resulted in clear descriptions of the positive roles played by youth workers.

The young people said that youth workers made suggestions and provided equipment. These statements were made very much in the context of such interventions being timely. The young people felt that youth workers knew them well enough to know the right time to make a suggestion or to pose a challenge. In providing equipment, they did it immediately, using their personal resources to circumvent the delays associated with public funds and formal mechanisms and this prevented the loss of momentum. Another timely intervention noted by the young people was the response to their own initiatives. The approach of the youth workers to this kind of reactive working had been fast and flexible.

Youth work staff had provided these young people with encouragement in abundance. They had explained things 'up-front', which most probably means with honesty. They offered young people alternative perspectives. They communicated their appreciation of the views of or the position of the young person. They were tolerant. They expressed support for young people when they felt themselves in the minority.

They illustrated to young people their understanding and familiarity with their worlds, by adopting a 'subtle', 'low-key' approach which, said the young people, was a pleasant contrast to the 'shouting, panic' behaviour of adults who do not understand young people.

The youth workers allowed young people to fail, although it was clear that they had been willing to be the cushions on which young people fell. They had sometimes provided something of a safety net, above which the young people had learned, tried and tested their knowledge and skills. They sometimes exposed young people, with their permission and in a supportive environment, to potentially emotionally high-risk settings. Related to this, was the strong emphasis placed, by the young people, on 'not being told', not being instructed but being allowed to find out and decide for themselves.

The young people appreciated the time being given to them by adults in the youth club and enjoyed being treated as equals.

The Survey of Young People through Young People

Although it may have been desirable to pursue the relationship between young people and youth workers through the survey, which was likely to have greater external validity, it was impossible since many of the young people taking part in the survey might have had no previous experience of youth workers. The questions raised, by the outset of the survey, concerned the gap between the majority of young people and the majority of adults which was capable of being bridged by some adults, in some circumstances. This is clearly crucial to youth work, since no matter what service is offered or however pro-active young people themselves are in delivering it, there will always be a point of inter-face between young people and the adult(s). So the survey pursued the notion of "acceptable adults".

Seventy one percent of the young people, significantly more young women than young men, knew an adult, outside the family, who they believed understood the way young people thought and behaved; 29% knew no-one like this.

8.5	The proportion of young men and young women who knew an acceptable adult (chi-squared test)		
	Male %	Female %	Significance Level
	59	84	.0002

Interestingly, young people who had, at some point in the past had an involvement with a youth group were more likely to know such an adult than those who had not, but the pattern was not repeated in terms of those who were still, at the time of the interview, involved in youth groups.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">8.6   Young people who knew an acceptable adult: the difference between those who had ever been involved in youth groups and those who had not (chi-squared test)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Involved
Young
People
%</td><td>Uninvolved
Young
People
%</td><td>Significance
Level</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>77</td><td>54</td><td>.0022</td></tr>
</table>

The role youth work has played is not clear. Perhaps it enabled young people to see adults in a different, more acceptable, light, to understand adults better (rather than vice versa), to make better relationships with adults or perhaps the experience helped to create an expectation of there being such adults in one's own life.

Half (48%) of the adults were men and half were women. Same gender adults were preferred by both young men and young women.

8.7 Gender of young people by gender of acceptable adults (chi-squared test)			
	Young People		
Adults	Male %	Female %	Significance Level
Male	72	30	
Female	28	70	.0000

Young people also estimated the age of "their adults". The age spread was wide, but a third (31%) were aged 30 to 35 with approximately a third (34%) below and a third (35%) above this category.

The young people were asked to describe, using as many of the pre-coded categories as they felt were appropriate, the relationship between "their adults" and themselves.

8.8 Young people's relationship to their acceptable adults	
	%
Friend of the family	31
Teacher, social worker or youth worker	29
Friend or relative of a friend	29
Someone living or working nearby	23
Someone at work	15

For 60%, this adult was known through family or friend; for over a quarter the adult was known in a professional role, and for rather fewer it was someone in the neighbourhood. 'Someone at work' is last on the list for the whole sample, but this represents a high proportion of young people in work (33% of those in work who knew such an adult). The younger half of the sample were more likely to nominate a professional.

8.9 Professional acceptable adult by age group of young people (chi-squared test)		
14 - 16 yrs. %	17 - 19 yrs. %	Significance Level
39	18	.0081

A very much higher proportion of those living in the countryside said 'a friend of the family' than those living elsewhere.

8.10 Friend of the family acceptable adult by home locality of young people (chi-squared test)				
City or Suburbs	Towns	Villages	Country-side	Significance Level
%	%	%	%	
19	35	27	67	.0438

The young people were asked what made "their adult" different from the rest. The question was open-ended. Some young people picked out just one characteristic, others selected several. A good proportion of the comments reflected the nature of the person: youthful or 'young at heart', open-minded, easy-going, understanding, kind, honest, unselfish, with a good sense of humour. Another cluster is concerned with the experience of the adult: familiarity with young people through work or the domestic sphere was important, as was a sense that the adult had "been there" and was therefore able to directly transfer the experience of their own pleasures and pain to their understanding of the young people's. Furthermore, there was knowledge amongst these adults of "how it is", of underlying themes and trends of the particular youth culture.

The last cluster is about behaviour. These adults were good listeners, who treated young people seriously and with respect. They expressed their interest without interfering, gave their time and were there when needed. They shared something of themselves and their lives with the young people, gave good advice, helped young people to "stand up for themselves" but never 'lectured' or lost their tempers. They were 100% trustworthy; they never repeated anything told to them in confidence. Knowingly or unknowingly, these adults were skilled communicators.

Learning about the Youth Work Relationship

Young people want time and space away from adults. They are not very likely to choose non-family adults as companions. They feel especially alienated from those adults who oppress them through disregard, through disrespect, by making judgements and by raising their voices.

Around two thirds of young people know an acceptable adult, who is likely to be of the same gender as the young person and two thirds of whom were estimated to be under 35. The capacity in which the young person knows the adult is unimportant: it seems that young people find their adults wherever they are - professionals (probably teachers) for the younger ones, 'someone at work' for those at work, youth workers for the youth club members at Shrublands and a friend of the family for those living in the countryside.

These adults were perceived by the young people to be different from the rest in their attitudes - treating the young people as equals, in nature or character, in their experience and in their behaviour. The adults were open and skilled communicators. Little is known of how well the adults knew the young people but the young people felt they knew much about "their adults". The adults were skilled operators within the intangible dimensions of the relationship, notably in respect of timing and balance.

There is an impression of a significant divide between the conceptual world of young people and the conventional adult society. In the former, young people know and are distanced from adults. In the latter, young people are no different from adults in many respects, but have a few distinct "problems".

The youth workers views were those of conventional adult society. They were less likely to be these if the workers were younger rather than older and full-time, to a lesser degree part-time paid rather than voluntary which may reflect the greater time currently being spent with young people, more training or a greater personal investment in youth work. Arguably, the views of youth workers were not those of an enlightened and professional work-force.

CHAPTER NINE

YOUTH WORK AND YOUTH WORK RESEARCH

A Change of Context

The last of three Ministerial Conferences took place in 1992. These

conferences had resulted in little more national coherence than the emergence of a

common statement of purpose. It had been agreed that a national curriculum for the

Service would be inappropriate and that the strengths of the Service lay in making a

local response to local issues. Agreement had, in fact, been impossible to achieve.

Even the content of the statement of purpose was a surprise to some of those who had

taken part in the conference at which it was drafted (Sawbridge, 1991). The statement

placed the emphasis on equality issues and the Minister distanced himself from it. The

process enhanced suspicion about the interest and the role of the National Youth

Agency in convening and steering the national agenda.

The process of review in youth services gathered momentum and the function

of these reviews was two-fold, at least. The national debate had fuelled the desire of

some managers and practitioners to establish and record with clarity the functions, the

intentions, the methods, the monitoring and the evaluation procedures of their

services. Many Local Authorities were facing the necessity of public expenditure cuts,

exacerbated by the change to Local Management of Schools (LMS). Youth services

had been led to believe that they needed to produce more and better for less and that

they must be able to demonstrate that they were doing so. This was the task with

which many services were struggling.

Young People and the Wakefield Youth Service

The climate of review facilitated my second attempt at examining the nature of

youth work and at developing research with young people. This time, the setting was

the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District, on the face of it, as different a setting

from Norfolk, as is likely to be found within the U.K.. An account of the research process and findings is given at Appendix F, but it is appropriate to highlight here the main similarities and differences

Summary of Similarities

In the areas where the studies in Wakefield and Norfolk are comparable there are many similarities. It was more younger than older young people in the age ranges who found it most difficult to find suitable places to meet their friends. Both groups of young people wanted somewhere warm, with a relaxed atmosphere, where it is possible to sit and talk to friends, with a narrow age band, 'open all hours'. Both groups additionally made comments related to access and territory and to the role of adults in young people's meeting places. A similar proportion (a fifth to a quarter) of young people who said they had no difficulty in finding places to meet friends, were meeting their friends on the streets. The pub was the meeting place for the older young people who were working.

A similar percentage of young people wanted to undertake activities which they were unable so to do. There were not quite two young people, on average, for each of the activities suggested. Both cohorts gave most popularly their reason for not pursuing their chosen activities that there were no local facilities.

Boy/girl relationships came top of the list of young people's anxieties and preoccupations, a concern which declined as the age of the young people increased. School/college work/exams. was another declining concern in both groups while money and jobs were concerns which increased with the age of the young people.

Ways of dealing with issues and anxieties and young people's learning experiences were coded in different ways in each of the two studies but there is nothing contradictory in the findings. The "acceptable adults" parts of the studies which had similar questions have similar answers. More than half and less than three quarters of the young people knew an adult who they felt understood them. Same

gender adults were preferred. The adults were thought, on average to be in their early thirties and were more often than not known to the young people in more than one capacity.

Differences between Cohorts

The stark differences are few. Many more Norfolk young people than Wakefield young people, 57% contrasted with 27% of those who said they had no difficulty in finding places to meet friends, were meeting their friends at the pub. The pub was the meeting place for more of the older young people in each group and for more of those who were working. The Norfolk sample was a little older than the Wakefield one and a much bigger proportion of the 16 and overs were in employment. This is perhaps at least part of the explanation.

In Wakefield in 1992, there was rather more concern amongst young people, than in Norfolk in 1990, about money and about relationships at home. There was more youth unemployment in Wakefield and the economic climate of the country had changed for the worse and this probably is the explanation for increased concern about cash and perhaps for tension in relationships as well.

There were large differences in the extent to which young people had been members of different types of organisation.

Additions to the Norfolk Material

The Wakefield survey added to the Norfolk survey in its content. It provided information on the ways in which young people were dealing with issues and their anxieties. It built on the learning experiences aspect of the Norfolk study, using a different coding frame which better facilitated the development of a model. It charts new territory in the exploration of relationships between young people and non-family adults.

Methodologically, the survey engaged with young people one step further than the Norfolk project had done, by involving them in the interpretation of the findings.

Main Findings

The concerns of both NYCS and the Wakefield Youth Service were primarily to pin down the content of what ought to be delivered in the light of young people's needs and wants at the turn of the decade. The question of exactly what Youth Services should deliver was never a question which could be answered systematically within the Youth Service. The question is limitless but the boundaries in answering it are to be found at the sum of services currently and previously offered by Youth Services and at the edge of young people's and youth workers' perceptions of what is possible. There is a mis-match between question and context.

The strength of this research is in examining, not what services should be delivered, but how services should be delivered. It is possible to say something about the nature of three particular modes of delivery: association, activities, and dealing with issues and anxieties. It is possible to go beyond these specifics to say something on three themes which clearly permeate more than one mode of delivery: the informal learning experience; the importance of young people to one another, the inter-face between young people and adults.

It examines the nature of youth work, articulating its tasks, techniques and tensions, mostly in the course of the 29 youth work initiatives, each of which was a project involving young people and youth workers concerned with finding out about some aspect of young people's lives. The relevance of these findings goes beyond youth work whose intention is research or research whose intention is to be youth work. The understanding can be applied to the breadth of youth project work.

It will be recalled that these findings were progressively developed through the research. As such they include and involve findings from the survey of youth workers' views, the youth work initiatives and the survey through young people. The findings

from the survey through young people may therefore be said to be the most fully formed in this research.

Association

Young people and adults alike are agreed that meeting one another is an important feature of being a young person. It is important not just to those young people who are highly visible in youth clubs, that is, those of statutory school age and more boys and young men than girls and young women. It is important to all young people, even those whose circumstances give them the basics of food and shelter to be concerned about. Young people want to meet their existing friends. They want to meet new people and this is especially important to girls and young women. They want to meet people they are already acquainted with, perhaps through school or work, in a more social setting.

Young people want to meet in places which are both safe and convenient. Safety has more than one dimension. One of these is location within what they perceive as their own community, a place which is close to home, a neighbourhood to which they belong and in which they feel secure. Another is concerned with safety from abuse or assault en route to and from their meeting place. There is a sense of needing to feel safe in respect of other young people, young people not part of the immediate peer group and hostile towards it. Protection from exposure to risks like alcohol and other drugs and conversely from law enforcement are also issues of safety. Thus young people's meeting places need to be many, one in every neighbourhood where there are young people to make use of it.

Young people want to meet their friends in small, intimate places which are sufficiently robust to withstand their use. Warmth, music and places to sit and talk are important. Opening hours need to be long; open almost every evening of the week and until late into the evening. They want there to be plenty of things to do but not to be forced to do them.

Young people seek a narrow age band. There is a sense that this is partly about avoiding the intimidation by older young people, which is perceived by the younger ones. It is partly about excluding the younger ones, some sort of a statement about maturity. There is also much to suggest that young people want to spend at least some of their time with particular cohorts, for example, girls only, Asian boys and young men only. More difficult to articulate the boundaries for, but nevertheless worthy, is young people's inclination to spend time exclusively with their own friendship groups.

Adult intervention, particularly that of parents and teachers - the adults which most young people have had most contact with, is unwelcome in young people's social meeting places. For some young people, the presence of adults is unacceptable. For others, young adults are more acceptable than older ones. For others, it is their intervention, when it has not been requested - their oppression of young people - which is unacceptable.

For a summary of the main findings with respect to association, please see figure 9.1.

9.1   Main findings: views of youth workers and young people on association

Meeting one another is important:
existing friends;
new people;
existing acquaintances in a different context.

Young people want to meet in an environment which is safe, warm, with music with places to sit and talk, with plenty of optional things to do.

Meeting place opening hours need to be long.

Young people seek places catering for a narrow age band.

Some young people, at least, desire forms of exclusivity.

The presence of adults in young people's meeting places is, to some, unwelcome, to some, unacceptable. Some adults - younger adults, not parents or teachers - are more acceptable than others.

For more detail see   chapter 5, pages 119-122, 133, 135, 137, 138-142, 149-152,
chapter 8, pages 204-206,
appendix F, pages 331-332.

Interests and Activities

All young people spend some of their leisure time engaged in the kind of activities which it is possible to drop in and drop out of. These activities require little preparation or planning, little or no specialist knowledge or skill and little commitment. Examples of these include watching television and videos and window shopping. For some young people these are their only interests, but it is probably wrong to view them as entirely passive.

There are other activities which attract the interest of a fair proportion: sports and recreational games; adventure activities, like outdoor pursuits and water-sports; martial arts; residential, away from home activities; drama and theatre. Each of these similarly attracts a fair proportion of active disinterest. Playing and listening to music is the only activity which attracts mass interest, without mass disinterest.

About a third of the youth population, more boys and young men than girls and young women, wants to undertake activities which have so far been inaccessible, everything from abseiling to windsurfing. If young people have heard of it, then some of them are likely to be interested in it, but their interest is very specific. For instance, if one type of motor-sport is desired, another is unlikely to suffice and so cannot be substituted. Furthermore, their interest is sophisticated. They seek a high level of specialisation, facility and equipment.

There are four main reasons that young people have been unable to pursue their ambitions. The first is their perception of no local facilities. The second, a much smaller proportion, is their perception of cost. The third is lack of information, including not knowing how to go about it and not knowing any other young people who would be interested. The last of the popular reasons is exclusion on grounds of age, gender, disability and race. Use of perception here is deliberate in that young people are sometimes unaware of what is available locally. Furthermore perceptions of both "local" and "available" vary.

For a summary of the main findings with respect to interests and activities, please see figure 9.2.

9.2   Main findings: views of young people on interests and activities

All young people engage in "drop in" activities.

Sports, games, martial arts, residential and drama activities attract both active interest and active disinterest.

Music is a source of interest to almost all young people.

About a third of young people have aspirations to undertake an activity they have been so far unable to pursue. Their interests are diverse.

Young people seek a high degree of specialisation and facility in respect of their leisure activities.

The reasons they do not undertake the activities of their choice include their perception of an absence of facilities, cost, lack of information and exclusion.

For more detail see   chapter 5, pages 128-132, 142-143, 149-152,
                       appendix F, pages 334-335.

Dealing with Issues and Anxieties

Young people clearly perceive a range of difficulties in their lives and the lives of their friends. Boy/girl relationships, financial pressure, academic work, relationships at home, own image or appearance and (future) work rank amongst the most common concerns within the age range. There is a marked consistency in the nature of these difficulties and the extent to which the difficulties are perceived as rising or falling through the Youth Service main age range. Boy/girl relationships and academic work decline as concerns as the young people get older within the range. Concern about financial pressure and work increase as young people get older within the range.

Youth workers, too, perceive serious concerns facing young people with occupation, education and leisure as top priorities, with a long list of other concerns facing a minority of young people in each case.

Many young people (29% in Norfolk and 44% in Wakefield) know no adults, outside the family, who they feel understand the way they think and behave. It is no

surprise then that young people's main responses to issues and anxieties are to talk to one another and to take some sort of independent and direct action on the situation. Far fewer talk to parents, avoid the issue or demonstrate their distress as responses. Girls and young women are more likely to talk and boys and young men more likely to act. Avoidance is practised almost entirely by boys and young men. Unemployed young people stand out as more likely to demonstrate distress and less likely than their working peers to either talk to peers or to take action. Talking to parents is a response confined to those in education and who are unemployed.

For a summary of the main findings with respect to dealing with issues and anxieties please see figure 9.3.

9.3   Main findings: views of youth workers and young people on dealing with issues and anxieties

The most common issues of concern to young people are boy/girl relationships, financial pressure, academic work, relationships at home, image and appearance and (future) work. Anxiety about boy/girl relationships and academic work decline through the 13 to 19 Youth Service priority age range. Concern about financial pressure and work increase.

Youth workers perceive the serious concerns facing young people to be occupation, education and leisure. They acknowledge a large number of issues which most believe to affect a minority.

Young people's main responses to their concerns are to talk to one another or to act directly on the situation.

Differences in response between sub-groups are marked: girls are more likely to talk, boys are more likely to act; unemployed young people are more likely to demonstrate distress and less likely than their working peers to talk to other young people or to act. Talking to parents is a response confined to those in education and to those who are unemployed.

For more detail see   chapter 5, pages 119-124, 147-148, 152-157,
                             chapter 7, pages 188, 195-196,
                             appendix F, pages 337-339.

The Informal Learning of Young People

Young people's informal learning can take place as the consequence of an every day event, like making the journey to school or to work or spending the evening with a few friends. It can take place as the consequence of an event which is almost inevitably usual for young people, but less usual for children or for adults, like making decisions around the transition from education to employment or starting and ending boy/girl relationships. It can also take place as the consequence of an optional challenge, like caring for a neighbour's pet for a few days or organising a holiday with friends. Although not necessarily exotic, it is almost overwhelmingly likely that the event will incorporate something which is new or unusual to the young person whose experience it is. The events are marginally more likely to be planned or pre-conceived in some way than spontaneous. They may take place in familiar or in unfamiliar, "away from home", settings. Given the amount of time spent away from home in relation to time spent at home, by most young people, a disproportionately high number of the experiences recounted by the Wakefield young people took place in unfamiliar surroundings.

The part played by the young people themselves is revealing. They are frequently the initiators. The events are the products of their own ideas and they secure the interest of others if this is necessary. Alternatively they respond to other people's ideas - those of adults outside the family and those of friends are fairly common stimuli - knowing as they make their response, that their part is important and the event is unlikely to take place without them. They play key parts in their experiences, sometimes in the lead, and if not, as significant supporters. The event might be a game of football, in which a young person has been asked to play. If the game will take place anyway and the young person's commitment is unimportant, as in a casual, "friendly" with as many players as there are young people, learning is less likely to occur than if the young person has a place in the team, an understood function to perform and the sole responsibility for carrying it out. Young people learn

much less often if their part is not important or if they participate as a fast reaction without thinking about the commitment they are making.

The activities from which young people achieve informal learning are more often than not undertaken in the company of other young people, mostly friends and a much smaller number are undertaken alone on a par with those undertaken in the company of adults.

Young people are not empty vessels into which informal education is poured. They bring with them a range of knowledge and skills to employ in the course of their activities. They bring with them predominantly social skills, like caring, and practical knowledge and skills relating to particular activities, like canoeing or playing an instrument, and to a lesser extent political skill, like organising or diplomacy. Social skills are more often employed by girls and young women and practical skills by boys and young men. However, they recognise political skill, as well as social and practical skills, as acquisitions of their experiences.

Young people learn twice as often from the experiences which involve broadly positive feelings as from those which involve broadly negative feelings.

For a summary of the main findings on the informal learning of young people please see figure 9.4.

9.4   Main findings: views of young people on their informal learning

Young people's informal learning is most likely to take place as the consequence of:
an every day event, usual to young people;
an optional challenge.

The event is likely to incorporate something new or unusual to the particular young person and is slightly more likely to be planned rather than spontaneous.

Time spent away from home is fertile ground for young people's learning.

Young people initiate their own learning experiences and respond to the ideas of others, particularly those of friends and non-family adults.

Young people play key parts in their learning experiences. Their commitment is important.

Young people accompany one another in their learning experiences.

Young people utilise the knowledge and skills they have to acquire more, in different "disciplines".

Young people are twice as likely to learn from experiences about which they feel positive rather than negative.

For more detail see   chapter 7, pages 188-196,
appendix F, pages 339-345.

The Importance of Young People to One Another

There have been several indications of the importance of young people to one another. Meeting and making friends is clearly a high priority for all young people. Young people share their concerns and anxieties with one another. Young people often provide the support, if not the stimulus, for other young people's informal learning experiences.

There is a strong sense of an age specific culture with its own perceptions and behaviour. It is not, however, homogeneous. There are differences which relate systematically to age group within the age range, to gender, to race, to different friendship groups and to young people in different circumstances. To some extent,

these differences are concerned with different interests but they are also concerned with young people's perceptions of what is possible and with young people's preferences, for example to spend at least some of their time with people who are like themselves in respect of age group, gender, race or circumstance. So these divisions represent sub-cultures within, sometimes even cutting across, the age culture.

Youth workers perceive young people in rural communities to have different concerns from young people in urban communities. Their concerns are, in some respects different, because their access to one another and to many facilities is more limited. Young people living in villages and in the countryside are not systematically different from their peers who live in urban environments but they nevertheless represent a community of interest whose concerns are less well addressed by public and commercial organisations.

Youth workers also perceive communities of interest in relation to a long list of social problems and issues, for example homelessness, sexual abuse, early parenthood, alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuses. The young people directly affected by these issues are perceived to be a minority in each neighbourhood.

For a summary of the main findings with respect to the importance of young people to one another please see figure 9.5.

9.5   Main findings: views of youth workers and young people on the importance of young people to one another

Meeting and making friends is important.

Young people share their concerns with one another.

Young people support one another's learning.

These are indicators of an age specific culture.

There are differences which create sub-cultures within and sometimes cutting across the age culture. These relate to:
    age group within the range;
    gender;
    race;
    friendship;
    circumstances;
    interests.

Rural young people are not systematically different from urban young people although their access to one another and to some facilities is more limited.

For more detail see   chapter 5, pages 119-126, 134-135, 149-152,
    chapter 6, pages 163-171, 176,
    chapter 7, pages 188, 194-196,
    chapter 8, pages 204-5,
    appendix F, pages 337-345.

The Inter-Face between Young People and Adults

Young people want to spend time away from the adults they know, who, for most of them, are parents and teachers. Some young people who have contact with adults from caring agencies, like social workers, health visitors and youth workers, maintain relationships with them in which there is an element, at least, of hostility. Non-family adults in general are rarely chosen by young people as companions and confidant(e)s.

Some young people know no adults who they feel understand their thinking and their behaviour. There is a proportion of young people, perhaps a fifth to a quarter of the young people in the Youth Service age range who do not know any adults they

perceive as understanding, who do not join organised youth provision and who meet their friends in unsupervised settings. This group is a sizeable minority and some young people are part members of it. The core is inevitably smaller. Whether engagement with adults is less important or whether it is less accessible or whether the terms are less acceptable to some young people is not clear. Perhaps the reasons are combined, multiple and include options not considered here.

There is just a glimpse of the systematic influence of culture and sub-culture. While there is no significant difference in the proportion of girls and young women by comparison with boys and young men who are engaged in some sort of friendly relationship with adults, the adults are more likely to be female than male. The Asian young men in Wakefield are much less likely than their 'U.K. white' peers to engage in such a relationship. Perhaps only Asian adults would have sufficient cultural understanding, making the adults most likely to be suitable, Asian women. It might be culturally unacceptable to Asian young men and to the other members of the Asian community in Wakefield to establish such a relationship with a woman. So with their options restricted to adult men, perhaps Asian men, perhaps even Asian men in Wakefield, the access of young people in this group is more limited than that of their 'U.K. white' peers. This, of course, is just one option. Such relationships may be curiously western and so culturally undesirable or less desirable to Asian young men.

The adults with whom young people establish understanding relationships are likely to be perceived by the young people to be around 15 years older than themselves and more likely than not to be of the same gender as themselves. They are likely to be known to the young people in a variety of capacities, as though those young people who seek, find and benefit from such relationships find them wherever they happen to be: teachers, or other professionals, for those at school; someone at work for those at work; a friend of the family for those living in rural communities. Adults known to young people in several different capacities, for example someone at work who is also

a friend of the family, a neighbour or a relative of a friend, often figure as the adult partners in young person-adult friendships.

These relationships are established over a period of several years, although friendships in which the adult is a professional are likely to be established more quickly, which is perhaps a reflection or recognition of the relationship as a means to identified purpose and on the professionals' skills. Same gender relationships last longer. Friendship partners spend around three or four mornings, afternoons or evenings together each week, or an equivalent amount of time in more intensive blocks with greater gaps between, although for partnerships involving younger teenagers a little less time may be invested.

These adults, especially the women, are accepting, facilitating honesty, trust and equilibrium in the relationship. They are supportive, being there to turn to and advocating when necessary. Shared culture (understanding the rules to which young people are party and subject), even shared thoughts, interests and social concerns are less common but when they exist, especially when adults have their own relevant experiences to draw on, this is significant to young people.

Clearly there are systematic and individual differences between young people, as there are between adults in the form of youth workers. Younger youth workers perceive more concerns affecting more young people than their older colleagues. Full-time youth workers, next to part-time paid youth workers, next to voluntary youth workers similarly perceive more concerns affecting more young people. The closer in age to the young people the youth workers are, the more time they spend engaged in their work, the more investment they have in the Youth Service, the more training they have, the more complexities they perceive in the lives of young people. While introducing the so far undiscussed arenas of training and commitment, this reinforces understandings acquired from young people about youth itself and about the amount of time which is invested in fruitful understanding relationships between young people and adults.

The question of adults' age, in the perception of young people, is an interesting one. The age of adults is difficult to judge through ordinary social contact and children are particularly poor at it. So it is possible that young people simply perceive those adults they find acceptable to be not very much older than themselves. Without ruling out this possibility, the argument is undermined in part by the differences in perception of young people's concerns by youth workers and the part dependency of youth workers' perceptions on their own age.

Another related explanation is that of ageism. People at both ends of the age spectrum are oppressed by the power located in the middle. A few characteristic attitudes and modes of behaviour are separated from the whole person and applied dishonestly or disproportionately to an entire age group resulting in negative stereotypical images of both youth and old age. Young people's preference for younger adults is perhaps a symptom of the extent to which they are influenced thus. It is equally if not more likely that it is a symptom of their distaste for their oppressor, not old but middle aged adults who are their parents, their senior teachers and who must seem to wield enormous power over them.

Adults in the 25 to 35 age group are the subjects of strong positive media images. In television programmes and advertising, the men are portrayed as affluent, acquirers of sought after new gadgetry. They are clever, successful "robbers". They are street-wise, fearless "cops". They are cool, confident businessmen. The women are beautiful and stylish. They are loved girlfriends, wives and mothers. They are witty working women. Perhaps young people's preference for younger adults is not surprising. These images are about power and oppression but there is no image of the oppressed to compare with the tangible oppressions of young people's experience.

For a summary of the main findings with respect to the inter-face between young people and adults please see figure 9.6.

9.6   Main findings: views of youth workers and young people on the inter-face between young people and adults

Young people want to spend some time away from the adults they know.

There is an element of hostility between some young people and adults from caring agencies.

Adults are rarely chosen as companions and confidant(e)s.

A fifth to a quarter of young people know no adults who they feel understand them.

The adults who young people feel do understand them are:
        more likely to be female than male;
        perceived as 15 years, on average, older than the young people themselves;
        likely to be known in more than one capacity.

Positive relationships between young people and adults are several years old, although professional relationships are established more quickly, and they involve spending substantial periods of time together.

The adults, especially the women, are accepting, supportive and to a much lesser extent, similar to the young people themselves.

Younger, full-time and paid youth workers perceive more of "their" young people as being affected by more issues than their older, part-time and voluntary colleagues.

For more detail see   chapter 5, page 133-134, 141,
                       chapter 7, pages 188, 194,
                       chapter 8,
                       appendix F, pages 337-339, 345-350.

Youth Work Tasks

        Making contact with young people is an obvious starting point. Youth clubs traditionally rely on establishing contact with those young people who present themselves, but these young people are only a proportion of the potential client group so making contact is more pro-active than this. It involves reaching out to young people wherever they are and at a more general level raising awareness amongst young people and the community of youth work and the Youth Service. Furthermore, it is

not a task which is carried out once at the start of a particular project, or worse, at the start of a youth worker's career in a particular post, it is a task which is repeated time and again.

There is usually a significant difference in the age of young people and youth worker. There may be differences of social class, gender, race, capability and/or sexuality with all the differences in values and behaviour that these systematic differences imply. There will undoubtedly be individual differences between young people as well as between young people and youth worker. Youth workers familiarise themselves with the cultural world which their young people live in and with individual situations and interests. They retain awareness, interest and appreciation of the position and the views of young people, which change. They share something of themselves and their own culture with young people. Thus the relationship is not one which exploits the young people better to equip the youth worker, it is a more balanced affair. They regard young people and adults, including themselves, as qualitatively equal.

Youth workers kindle their own interest in their work and they allow it to be stimulated by others. They intellectually make the connection between the individual concerns of young people or local, neighbourhood concerns and regional, national even inter-national issues.

Youth workers give young people time. They make suggestions and they respond to young people's ideas. They pose challenges, that is to say that some of their suggestions and responses are designed to require young people to stretch from where they are to where they need to be. They present alternative perspectives.

Workers identify the necessary resources including time, their own and that of the young people, and particular kinds of knowledge and skill. They secure reliable resources. Youth workers are creative in accessing facilities and equipment from a variety of sources, often their own, to prevent lost opportunity. They make themselves aware of decisions affecting young people and youth work, being made beyond the

youth work arena and they seek to influence these in favour of young people and to communicate decisions and likely impact to young people themselves.

Youth workers negotiate with young people the rules for involvement in projects. These include what can be expected by and what is expected of the people who take part - the tasks, the skills, the time, the feelings and so on. They communicate the honesty of their intentions, leaving young people in no doubt about their enthusiasm for and commitment to the particular project and about their loyalty to the young people. There should be no cause for young people to suspect that youth workers have any kind of hidden agenda. If part or all of the project is about young people learning something they need or want to know or to know how to do or it is about young people feeling something they have not felt before, then young people know this as they embark upon it. This constitutes a formal or an informal contract which represents the commitment being made by all parties.

Youth workers are tolerant of young people. They encourage them. They expose them, with their permission, to emotional risks. They support them, especially when they are in a less powerful position. Youth workers do not instruct. Rather, they allow young people to find out for themselves. They allow young people to fail, though they may cautiously employ the use of a safety net, above which young people can test and try in relative security, so that their failures do not prohibit them from trying again another time.

For a summary of the emergent findings with respect to youth work tasks please see figure 9.7.

9.7   Emergent findings: youth work tasks

Make contact with young people.

Familiarise self with the cultural world of young people.

Share something of self and own culture with young people.

Kindle own interest in work.

Accept stimulation offered by others.

Make the connection between the individual concerns of young people and broader issues.

Give young people time.

Make suggestions.

Pose challenges.

Present alternative perspectives.

Identify and secure the necessary resources for project work.

Make self aware of decisions affecting young people and influence them in their favour, where possible.

Negotiate honestly with young people the rules for their involvement in youth work.

Tolerate, encourage and support young people.

Expose young people, with their permission to risks.

Allow young people to find out for themselves and, sometimes, to fail.

Provide a "safety net", when appropriate.

For more detail see   chapter 4
                        chapter 7,
                        chapter 8, pages 204-208, 211,
                        appendix F, pages 339-350.

<u>Techniques</u>

Techniques are the means which facilitate successful completion of the tasks. They incorporate the values, the knowledge, the skills and the acceptable behaviour of the youth work culture itself.

At one level, are the attributes of the youth worker. Youth workers are honest in their dealings with young people and other members of the community. They do not keep "adult only" secrets because they believe that it is young people's right to know about the things which affect them. They do not work, behind young people's backs, in collaboration with other adults, like parents or other professionals. If they make a decision or take a course of action which is unpopular with young people, they explain, as best they can, what they have done or intend to do and why.

Youth workers have courage about embarking on ventures of which, at the outset, they have little knowledge. They are willing to take risks, although they do it with a degree of caution. They do not feel the need to be the expert. They learn as they go, often alongside the young people with whom they are working.

Commitment is another feature, one which refers to reliability and consistency. These are attributes, aspects of duty, no more than should be expected of someone who has made a paid or voluntary contract to carry out a piece of work. Youth work demands and youth workers give much more than this. They believe in the importance of what they do. They utilise their own personal resources (most notably time, but often personal transport, equipment, the skills of family members, friends and neighbours). Their work assumes a high priority in their lives and they turn many stones in performing it.

Related to youth workers' commitment is their ruthlessness of intent. The environment in which youth work takes place - the community of young people, the adult community, the Youth Service - holds many diversions. There are competing pressures from different groups of young people, from adults about different groups of young people, from members of the community who seek to enlist the youth workers

time and energy for a broader community remit, from Youth Service managers in respect of broader Youth Service events and so on. Against this backdrop, dogged determination is a characteristic feature of youth project work.

The last of the five youth worker attributes is vigilance. Youth workers maintain an awareness of what is happening within and beyond the community which has an impact for young people. They have high standards for what is acceptable to young people. They do not allow young people's quality of life, as an issue, to slide from the agenda of selves, colleagues, their own agencies and external forums where possible.

The youth work agenda is drawn from a variety of sources: young people themselves, the youth worker, issues in the immediate community and broader concerns. The agenda is open not fixed. Fast and flexible responses are features of good practice.

Expertise is secured wherever it can be found. Youth workers are experts in working with young people but not in the range of interests they want to pursue. Youth workers know what they know and they know what they do not know.

Emotional engagement with people and with issues operates in partnership with pragmatism about what can be achieved with the resources which can be obtained. This is just one aspect of the equilibrium which is maintained in youth work. It also retains a delicate balance of power between young people and youth worker. Timing is sensitive, such that suggestions are given at the time that young people are most likely to be interested, challenges are posed when young people are likely to rise to them, information is given when young people most need to know, advice is given when it is sought. Youth workers seek to maintain momentum in youth projects, negotiating the pace so that interest is not prematurely lost.

Youth project work incorporates a kind of shared ownership. For example, it is possible that a project is owned by Service management in that this is where the agenda item was raised and it is where progress is being monitored. It is owned by

those practitioners who pick up the agenda item and run with it because it is they who have made the connection between the central issue and a concern or interest of the young people with whom they work. It is furthermore owned by the young people who direct and control their own engagement with it.

In the spectrum of approaches to people, youth work uses the most personal which is practical in the circumstances. Leaflets through doors are more effective than posters in shop windows, telephone calls are more accessible than letters, personal contact is more effective than both. Consultation and communication are key practices.

Youth workers' autonomy enables them to network. This means meeting other people working with young people and communities to share ideas, discuss problems, develop practice and to trade skills.

When youth work project work fails, for example, the young people lose interest or do not achieve what was intended, youth workers look first to their own interventions to establish the reasons. They learn from their experience.

For a summary of the emergent findings with respect to youth work techniques please see figure 9.8.

9.8   Emergent findings: youth work techniques

Youth worker attributes:
>   honesty;
>   courage;
>   commitment;
>   ruthlessness of intent;
>   vigilance.

Keep the youth work agenda open.

Make fast and flexible responses.

Secure expertise wherever it can be found.

Maintain the equilibrium between:
>   emotional engagement and pragmatism;
>   young people and self.

Be sensitive to timing and momentum.

Share ownership.

Use the most personal approach which is possible.

Retain a degree of autonomy and network.

Learn from own experience.

For more detail see   chapter 4,
>   chapter 7,
>   chapter 8, page 211,
>   appendix F, pages 348 - 349.

Tensions

Returning to the theme of equilibrium, there is a range of tensions and these are both the province of the agency or the organisation and the practitioner.

New pieces of work emerge from both internal (to the organisation) and external sources. Projects which are perceived as being imposed are likely to be the victims of suspicion, anger and jealousy which impede progress and which are arguably less likely to affect projects which are grown from within. In establishing the

Norfolk project, I employed a model for change which I had grown to understand from my experience of developing practice in another Service: consultation - training - action - evaluation - networking - more action - more training and so on. Thus the opposition I experienced in Norfolk came as a surprise and at first I felt that the culture of the Norfolk Service was so radically different from my own, that the model was inappropriate. In Wakefield, the project was different but the understanding guiding my approach was the same and so, in broad terms, was the model. Here, where I was once again an insider, the model met no opposition. There are clear implications for whether or not projects are imported into Youth Services and, if so, the necessity of there being enough time to overcome the difficulties encountered or for the project to undergo some measure of organic growth.

Interest can be sustained only at the level at which it can be supported. Sharing the ownership of youth project work requires persistent attention. Youth workers need to find the part of it they can own, to familiarise themselves with it, and to identify the part that they can, in turn, share with young people. This process of shared ownership is hindered to some extent by the diversity of skill levels amongst youth workers in one Service or even one unit. At one end of the scale, training and development may be entirely superfluous, since the work is already being competently undertaken and, at the other, may be irrelevant because the particular themes or issues have not appeared on the practitioner's agenda. Thus pitching the level of training and development initiatives in the Youth Service is a tension of a multi-skill level organisation.

Introducing new pieces of work or different ways of working can be hindered by a range of expectations of what youth work or a particular youth club or project is about. The young people who are involved have expectations. If they have come along to the youth club to meet their friends they may not want to, for example, do video work. If they are a group who have come along to do video work, they may lose interest if the youth workers' attention is taken up by those who have come along to meet friends. If one youth worker in a team is concentrating on a particular group of

young people and a particular project, there may be animosity amongst youth workers because the others feel they are left with humdrum duties, or the real work of the whole team.

Some young people are involved with a large number of initiatives and these young people are easy for adults to make contact with, easy to communicate with and are the targets of adult attention. They have many commitments and when forced to prioritise, they adopt conservative, adult-like values concerned with perceptions of tangible, long-term and socially acceptable benefits. Youth project work often loses these young people to more tangible enterprises like academic work, vocational interests, specialist sports and arts activities and more clearly understood youth work ventures like the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the uniformed organisations. This raises the need to ensure that young people and communities understand the benefits of youth project work, but this, in itself, will not render the benefits popular. It furthermore raises the question about which young people youth workers actively seek to engage with.

The interests of adult members of the community are sometimes different from the interests of young people in communities and youth workers as both adults in the community and the advocates of young people can find themselves torn in both directions and isolated.

Courage and caution are the ends of a spectrum on which youth workers locate their actions. A degree of courage is essential in having faith in young people to carry out their part of the contract. It is necessary to embark on activities of which the youth worker may have little experience and to do this in view of young people, colleagues, managers and the public. Caution is necessary to assess own capacity, to guide young people in assessing their own potential. Application of caution prevents the diverting outcry of a misunderstanding society over socially unacceptable intentions, for example, the empowerment of young people, and socially unacceptable methods, like giving responsibility to young people.

The vulnerability of youth work - lack of clarity about the tasks and the techniques and insecurity of funding - is influential. Youth workers are sometimes reluctant to seek alternative expertise, rather they try to do specialist tasks, for which they are not qualified, for themselves. If another expert is needed, then they wonder what their own function is. The clarity of other occupations, for example instructor, is attractive. Youth workers find themselves defending what is sometimes the indefensible, to justify continued support of their work and their own posts. Furthermore, youth work is sometimes funding led, when the availability of resources involves manufacturing the interest amongst young people and communities.

Time is an issue at several levels. Youth workers need time to think, to plan and to evaluate as well as to engage with young people. For full-time youth workers, many of whose time is additionally taken up with training, staff supervision, research and debate, even contact time with young people is difficult to retain, to say nothing of adequate preparation and follow up time for their own practice. For part-time paid staff, contracts are rarely specific about the amount of time to be spent with young people and the amount to be spent supporting this main activity. There is reluctance in management to be specific since some feel that much of the voluntary time which is currently given may be lost in the process. Suffice to say that time to carry out the necessary youth work, support and agency functions is a constant tension.

The notion of formal employment in youth work is a central issue. Young people's lives, in which youth work is rooted, are continuous. Youth workers are employed for fixed periods of time. There is very limited contact time between both full-time and part-time youth workers and young people. Youth workers have comparatively long holiday periods and most Services operate for no more than 43 weeks of the year. Personal versus agency workload is a related tension and this has implications for contingency plans.

For a summary of the emergent findings with respect to youth work tensions, please see figure 9.9.

9.9   Emergent findings: youth work tensions 1988 - 1994

Imported projects versus organic growth.

Diversity of skill level amongst youth workers

New pieces of work versus traditional approaches which match expectations.

Those young people who are easiest for adults to relate to are most heavily committed.

The interests of adult members of the community versus those of young people.

The need for courage tempered by caution.

The vulnerability of professionals, one of whose tasks is to find specialist expertise outside the Service.

The need to manage time to work with young people, to think, to plan to evaluate and to fulfil agency functions.

The imposition of organisation on community.

For more detail see   chapter 4,
                        chapter 7.

Practice, Policy and Training Issues

Understanding Youth Work

My research illuminates three understandings which underpin youth work: the world of young people as a different world from that of adults; the ways in which young people experience informal learning; and the nature of the inter-face between young people and adults. It furthermore articulates the range of responsibilities which youth work assumes and enhances understanding of the ways these are carried out, the values inherent within them and the integral problems.

My account is necessarily linear but youth work is far from linear. Not all of the identified components are employed in every piece of youth project work. Even where two projects employ identical components, the processes are likely to be

different because of the order in which the components are employed. They may be employed in parallel with one another. The emphasis between them varies. Some tasks, more often that not, come before others but the order of events and activities is not of over-riding importance. What is important is that these identified elements are present in preference to direct alternatives.

My research sheds little light on whether or not youth work has a specified function. While supporting much of what was said before and during my research about youth work being method and process, my findings offer a development to this notion. I have found little evidence to demonstrate that the order of events or applications of youth work is of particular importance. Rather, the understandings are carried at all times, so that they can be employed, as parts or in their entirety, at the discretion and with the integrity of the practitioner, in appropriate circumstances or settings. Diversity of application requires the employment of craft. The craft is youth work. It is a craft, rather than a process or a method, because the order of events is not laid down. The tasks and techniques are selected and employed with integrity for appropriate purpose. The tensions are understood and resolved or their equilibrium maintained. The craftsperson is the youth worker.

Providing

A long-standing and traditional role for the Youth Service is the provision of meeting places for young people and it is a role which most Services continue to carry out, to a greater or lesser degree. That young people feel they want places to meet their friends is not in dispute, but fulfilment of this expression of social need does not sit comfortably alongside the educational thrust of the Youth Service rhetoric of the 1990s.

Secondary debates on the provision of young people's meeting places surround the characteristics of the meeting places young people seek and whether or not these can be sanctioned within the philosophical frame-work of the Youth Service and,

increasingly poignantly, whether or not these can be resourced. One such group of characteristics relates to social divisions (age group, gender, race and locale) as boundaries to participation. The other contentious issue, unpalatable to many adults in the Youth Service, is young people's rejection of adults in their meeting places.

A third type of discussion concerns whether or not providers can believe what young people say about their need to meet one another and the types of environment in which they want their social interactions to take place. It is clear that some young people, albeit a minority, have nothing to do with formal youth provision, at any point in their lives: it is not what they want. Most, however, engage with it for a period of time at some point in their lives. This perhaps means that what exists is what some young people want, that it goes some way towards what they want or that some young people are prepared to tolerate what is offered even if it is not very much of what they want. Providers have less motivation to change their services if those which are offered are well used.

Some Youth Services also provide activities for young people. There seems, in general, little justification for this where such activities are provided by other, specialist agencies. Young people seek a high level of specialism in the activities they choose and aspire to a high level of facility. There may, however, be a case for the provision of activities not provided or not provided for (particular groups of) young people or not provided sufficiently locally by other agencies.

Access and Advocacy

A more effective response to young people's interest in specialist activities may be to facilitate their access via, for example, "young person friendly" information - not just what is available but how to go about getting involved. Lack of the type of information which young people can absorb may be one straightforward explanation for why they do not always take part in activities they are interested in and which are available in their localities. In keeping with this approach is the provision of support

for young people moving into new territory. Other explanations may be concerned with the cost, the dominant regime or the prejudices which are commonly held about young people in general or particular groups of young people in particular. A powerful Service response here may be one of advocacy to inform public and commercial providers, to speak on behalf of young people and thereby to negotiate their access.

Advocacy is clearly a function which needs to be fulfilled in respect of all young people since there are age specific concerns which young people are unable to address for themselves and which are addressed in arenas to which young people themselves do not have access. There are additionally age specific concerns which some young people address competently by making use of the resources available to them and there are some sub-groups of young people for whom the task is more difficult and to whom adequate resources are not available. There are some sub-groups who have more concerns than others and who cannot, unsupported, address them all competently.

Facilitating

It seems as though few of those young people who know adults to whom they can turn, turn to them to share their concerns and anxieties. The every day issues confronting young people are shared, if with anyone at all, then most likely with other young people. These are the people who are trusted to understand and not to make anything worse, whether or not they are the people most skilled or well-placed to offer counsel and advice. This suggests that the feasibility of training young people as specialist counsellors and advisers should be explored. At a more general level, there is scope to enable all young people to be good counsellors and advisers to their friends. Furthermore, some of the concerns expressed by young people, are so common, that there is probably justification for young people being enabled to examine them and the options available as a preventive or, at least, preparatory measure.

This, added to young people's preferences for meeting places in which the adult position is, at least, a back seat one, begins to paint a picture of adults in the Youth Service taking much more of a facilitating rather than a providing role. Delivery of services by peers has its attractions for young people. Its successes in, for example, peer education programmes and, within this research project, in peer research, indicate that the notion justifies further enquiry.

Developing Youth Work Expertise

Young people's informal learning clearly takes place with or without youth work or other adult intervention. It is not, however, a mystical happening which occurs "willy-nilly", spontaneously, without explanation of cause or effect. There is scope for youth work to facilitate, to make it occur more often, more predictably and, perhaps, qualitatively more effectively.

Exotic projects are largely unnecessary, although experiences new or unusual to the particular young people are almost essential. The unfamiliar environment has special merit. This reinforces what youth workers know from experience about the

value of residential experiences, as though this different and consequently challenging environment is enough to be the catalyst to more specific stimuli.

Young people need the opportunity to make the contract about the experience. They need to know what is expected of them, especially what measure of commitment, and it is important that they make the conscious decision to participate. Although young people learn from the events to which they react rather than initiate or respond to, this is much less likely.

Youth workers should nurture young people's ideas and proposals. They should also present ideas for acceptance or rejection. Non-family adults and friends initiate events from which young people learn next often in frequency to the young people themselves. Adults should maintain a low profile, a back seat facilitating role, and should employ the use of a safety net cautiously since this reduces the responsibility assumed by the young people and only when the part the young people play is vital to the venture will young people reliably achieve informal learning.

Female and male participants are more likely to bring with them those skills which are traditional to their gender. These should be valued since young people learn, in similar and in different skill arenas, when they are operating from a position of strength and confidence in their existing skills. Recognising young people's strengths, helping them to identify these for themselves, and encouraging young people to use them thus facilitates further learning.

Youth work has long been evaluated, or at least judged by youth workers and young people, in terms of whether a majority enjoyed the experience. This criterion has had scorn poured on it but the "feel good" factor is significant in whether young people recall incidents as ones with positive learning outcomes for themselves.

Understanding young people's impressions of adults in general and self in particular is an important facet of youth work. Sensitivity to young people's feelings about the way they want to be treated and the ways they feel they are treated by adults may prevent youth workers from being oppressive adults. Understanding the positive

attributes and attitudes of those adults that young people find acceptable may help youth workers to acquire them.

What is clear is that the relationships which exist are firmly entrenched in the community. They are the products of massive time investments, both in terms of hours per week and duration over the years. This special phenomena is unlikely to develop between a young person and youth worker if the sum of their contact is two sessions per week, for little more than 40 weeks of the year over a period of, say, two years before the young person's interest moves beyond the agency. If the Youth Service is concerned to facilitate this type of relationship, then it must invest in it, else it will not happen.

The current trends are to plan and evaluate in terms of outcomes but this is not enough. That particular objectives are achieved - young people have learned something important to them, young people recognise that their confidence has increased, and so on - is not enough to say that competent youth work has taken place. It says that young people have arrived but not how they travelled nor what happened to them and to their environment en route. It is good to plan with the outcomes in mind, to keep the intended outcomes in mind throughout the project but it is not enough.

Evaluation in youth work is essentially qualitative. Whether or not an objective has been achieved is barely qualitative. Even explanations sought and found say nothing, on their own, about the extent to which objectives are achieved. Thus the scope of my research is to add criteria to that which is simply concerned with outcomes, leading to a more qualitative assessment.

A number of components and characteristics of young people's meetings places, activities, problem resolution and informal learning experiences have been identified. These can be incorporated into project planning. Their presence or absence are criteria for evaluation. While each component or characteristic in itself is, like outcomes, barely qualitative, the sum of them, along with the sum of intended

outcomes, give greater breadth to the evaluation without becoming less systematic. This says "present" or "absent" but about a range of components, including outcomes and process, and begin to give a feeling of the qualitative.

This is useful in planning, less useful in evaluation and still insufficient. It relies on broad generalities when so many of the influences in youth work are specific, even unique. Young people themselves are different from one another, groups of young people are different systematically and individually from other groups, communities are different from one another, Youth Services are different from one another, youth clubs and projects are different from one another, youth workers are different from one another and the sum of these differences render each piece of youth work different from the rest, at least in some respects.

The planning task then involves the identification of intended outcomes, the general level components and, specific to each project, the tasks to be undertaken, the techniques to be employed and the tensions which exist.

Assessment of the success with which tasks were identified and carried out, with which techniques were employed and tensions resolved or their balance maintained does more than add a string of criteria to which it is possible to say "present" or "absent". These are criteria about which it is possible and necessary to ask questions of degree and significance, for example, "Was it important?" "How well was it done?" Addressed in the reverse order to which they were considered in planning facilitates some sort of assessment of the extent to which projects were successful, even when intended outcomes were not achieved.

Thinking of youth work as a craft, rather than as a profession or a trade, suggests linking questions of application are further necessary. For example, "Are the young people satisfied?" "Were the intended outcomes appropriate to the client group?" "Were the components appropriate for the intended outcomes?" "Were the tasks, techniques and tensions accurately identified and appropriate to the intended outcomes and the particular components?"

Youth work is a craft but this is not to say that the apprenticeship, "learn while you work" model is wholly appropriate. The tasks, techniques and tensions require significant intellectual skill as well as experience of practical application. Youth workers need, as a first priority, to be accomplished. They need knowledge and understanding of issues but they need intellectual skill to manipulate their knowledge and this retains the usefulness of the classroom. In youth work, theoretical knowledge is useless unless it has an application and unless practitioners can make the connection. These intellectual skills are difficult to acquire in the work-place when the environment is not conducive to clear thinking. These skills need to be developed in the classroom and practised in the work-place.

There is an issue around youth workers' ability to undertake practitioner research. The knowledge and skills for research are different from youth work, although there are overlapping areas. The experience of most trained youth workers is of critiquing research, often of discrediting it. They have a broad "understanding of" but they do not have the "specialist knowledge and skills to undertake it" successfully. This raises the narrow point that youth workers perhaps need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to conduct successfully small scale research since the development of their practice depends on it. High quality practitioner research is central to practice.

Youth work has been so non-specific that youth workers have often drifted into more specialist areas of work. This has its attractions. The tendency has been exacerbated by youth workers not knowing the boundaries of their expertise. Youth workers need to know what they know but they also need to know what they do not know and it is partly the function of training to ensure this.

The main resource of the craft is the craftsperson. The workload is personal and the combination of composite parts is unique, thus it is very difficult for another craftsperson to carry out a piece of work started by another. A skilled craftsperson may be able to do it, with better results than the originator, but rarely the same. Thus

the commitment of the youth worker to the project is of paramount importance. Perhaps the most important question of all which youth work must address, is how best to secure the commitment of youth workers to the projects which they own - the gamut of the staff development policy.

Own Culture Research

The time period between the Wakefield and Norfolk studies (1991 - 1992) had provided me with the privilege of reflection. I had become more interested in what I perceived as the gaps between, firstly, the views of adults by comparison with the views of young people, and secondly, in the difference in the "feel" of the material which had emerged from the three Norfolk enquiries.

I found a parallel in some of the writing of feminist researchers. Marshall (1986) records how as she acted on her research so it acted on her, changing her view-point from that of objective scientist to feminist researcher. She discovered the feminist research literature after her data had been collected.

I had set out to be the action researcher and had progressively become disenchanted with a good deal of the data collected and with the lack of activity which seemed to be taking place as a consequence. I had changed strategy with the survey through young people, choosing a style of research which would reliably produce data. In doing this, while trying to retain the participative under-current of the Norfolk project, I collected data which "felt" qualitatively better. It felt better because it fitted better with the full-time practitioner's familiarity with young people that I took with me to Norfolk. My research had acted on me.

Wilkinson (1986) says of feminist research, that it is 'for women' rather than 'on women'. Its purpose it 'to develop us' rather than 'to tell them'. Harding (1986) says that the methods of feminist research are not necessarily different, but that the source of the question, the purpose, the relationship between researcher and researched and what counts as important or adequate may be different.

Clearly my work with young people does not qualify, by these exacting criteria, as "own culture" research. I recognised, however, that it was different from that which preceded it and that the approach had the potential to serve young people's interests better.

Youth Work Research

My research was initiated and developed because two Youth Services felt in need of research to inform policy and practice. The first of my youth work research conclusions is that youth work needs research since elements of the craft are concerned with finding out about young people.

My research is not exhaustive. The original Norfolk research brief was license to dig ditches in the Fens and this was a reflection of the huge range of purposes and tasks which were perceived as potentially appropriate within the Service. Three years had passed between starting to conduct research in Norfolk and starting to conduct research in Wakefield. Little, in this respect, had changed. There was a genuine desire to be more systematic about competently delivering services to young people but the agenda was just as long. There is little empirical research in youth work, even less in 1989, at the outset of my work, it is inevitable that these tentative steps would be all-encompassing rather than narrow and specific. Each of the avenues explored suggests further research about young people themselves and about youth work craftspersonship. Furthermore, this research, because it is broad based, opens up possibilities for studying aspects of youth work in greater depth. It provides points of reference, it indicates areas of interest, pockets of knowledge and highlights the gaps.

The Methods as Policy-Oriented Research

I used three broad approaches: the census of youth workers views; the youth work initiatives; the survey through young people. The emphasis placed on the initial purposes of providing information while influencing practice and of being youth work

shifted during the course of the Norfolk contract. As outcomes emerged, decisions concerning methodology were influenced. The different elements of the research project fulfilled in varying degrees the diversity of functions.

The survey of youth workers' views was, though not based on the work of other researchers or reviewers, to a large extent a replication of previous reviews of youth provision. Data was collected, predominantly quantitatively in this instance, from the 'experts', adults working with young people in the broad sphere of statutory and voluntary youth work. Adult experts were the main source of material used in the three national reviews of the Youth Service - Albemarle, Milson-Fairbairn and Thompson - which preceded my research. These reviews had comprised the information used by many Services in determining their youth work policies. This strategy, particularly in respect of the Albemarle Report, had been questioned before for a lack of rigour in methods (Jeffs, 1979).

This problem resolved, the survey should have provided strong information for use by managers of the Norfolk Service in determining the future of the Service. There was, however, a crucial flaw in the use of the material for this purpose. The vast majority of people working with young people in Norfolk (as in most Local Authority areas) were part-time paid or voluntary workers. As such, many had received no training at all and the majority of those who had been trained, had undertaken attendance based, part-time youth work training, still then in use in Norfolk but since discontinued there, as it had been in other parts of the country.

Furthermore, the part-time nature of these adults' involvement with young people outside their families, meant that they really cannot have known very many young people well enough to know what their concerns were. Some of the views expressed in the questionnaires, for example, 'Our children are too young to be affected by these issues' encourage me to believe that some of the responses I received were completed by people who did not know enough about young people in general or about their young people in particular, to answer my questions.

The views represented in the practitioner survey were consequently not, in the main, the views of professional youth workers, trained to employ a perspective which is young person centred, but the views of caring adults in the community. They were the views of the general public, probably better informed by the popular media and by personal anecdotes than by training and sufficient quantity and quality of experience.

The youth work initiatives, in contrast, produced a patchy quality of data, a combination of the work of young people themselves and the strongest full-time and part-time, paid and voluntary youth workers. Although it was just possible to group the outcomes of the initiatives, they were strictly non-comparable because of the specific questions addressed, because of differences in the characteristics of the young people involved and because of the diversity of methods employed. The strongest feature, in respect of policy, of this aspect of the project was the extent to which the chunks of high quality understanding achieved were present to inform the content and the method of what was to follow, the survey through young people.

The survey through young people produced quantitative data, from a systematically sampled group of young people, through young people themselves on a range of questions, organised to reflect generally understood models of youth work, on the question of young people's needs and on young people's understanding of acceptable adults. It provided, then, a wealth of relevant information capable of informing the future policies of the Norfolk Youth and Community Service. Its weakness, lies not so much in its methods, as in the paucity of appropriate theoretical material on which to build the content. In the absence of an accepted theory of youth work, theoretical concepts of 'need' were borrowed from social psychology, ideologies of youth work from contemporary writers like Mark Smith, Tony Jeffs and Bernard Davies and understanding of the youth work relationship was built on outcomes of the youth work initiatives.

The Methods as Action Research

Action research influences practice through an evaluation of an action imposed on the practice. This was neither the prime intention nor a significant outcome of the practitioner survey. However, the questions asked encouraged practitioners to think about young people and youth work. So at the level of the individual, the process of my asking questions and practitioners seeking to answer them undoubtedly initiated and encouraged critical analysis of practice, but the scale of this or its impact is impossible to measure.

The process of the youth work initiatives phase was designed to influence practice through this means. It was successful only in part. Halted because of the changing national climate and because of the difficulty of supporting practitioner involvement to good effect, there was never an opportunity for a corporate evaluation. Each individual piece of work had some influence at the level of the individual practitioner and even at the level of the particular youth work unit; there were many examples of this. Allocation of sports facilities was changed after a group interview revealed that girls were receiving far less time than boys. Youth workers in another unit learned to value and promote the relationships with young people they were offering and to include relationships in the criteria for evaluating their work. Youth workers took support from the outcomes of at least two of the initiatives to endorse existing practices in their units. Another youth work unit used the process and findings of its project to inform the development of a new piece of work. One youth worker used his experience of involvement with the research project to identify the characteristics of the setting which, he felt, could support work with small groups in the youth club. There was some sort of change to or reinforcement of individual or unit practice in 12 of the 16 pieces of work. This was the level at which this part of the research project demonstrated its strength.

The survey through young people had some scope, in the context of action research, in that it placed a degree of power over the collection and ownership of the

material with the young people themselves. Norfolk's physical size, the diverse backgrounds of the young interviewers and the constraint of time prevented me from enabling the young interviewers to combine and utilise the power they individually held. Thus the potential of this survey was unrealised. The repeat performance in Wakefield enabled the method to take one step further in this direction but one step only.

The Methods as Youth Work

The survey of youth workers' views was predictably poor as a vehicle for youth work. At best, it provided a degree of access, a pre-requisite of youth work, for me to young people via youth workers, but even this is a question for discussion.

The youth work initiatives fulfilled the three categories of criteria, in varying degrees. Since I was the youth worker in only a few of these, it is difficult to be resolute in my assessment. Although the decision about the nature and the methods of the enquiry lay with the youth work units themselves, I am certain that one held a marked relevance to the lives of the young people involved. Several more had some relevance but since the enquiries were, in the main, limited to producing outcomes to which an immediate response within given resources could be made, they were relevant to young people and their involvement with youth provision which may not have been a very significant part of their lives at all. Furthermore, it is only in the same piece of work, that I was aware of a high quality youth work relationship between youth worker and young people. It may have existed elsewhere, I am almost certain that it did because of the results achieved but I am not in a position to be certain. In many more of the youth work initiatives, five at least, there is evidence of young people's informal learning about themselves, their peers and about democratic processes and there are demonstrations of their acquisition of social and political skill.

Twenty five of the young interviewers in the Norfolk survey through young people took part in either a de-briefing group discussion or if this was inconvenient,

completed questionnaires about their experiences as interviewers. Many of them recorded acquisition of self-awareness, of familiarity with others' perspectives and of the development of social skills. I asked for their advice on what I should offer to young people in their situations, should I ever undertake such a project again. It emerged that they had felt motivated and supported by the tangible and abstract facets of the relationship I, in youth worker mode, was able to establish with them. One or two of the interviewers said that their motives for participating had been ,at least in part, altruistic, to help towards creating better services for young people in the future, but this is the closest I came to finding evidence that the project was making a particular social commentary, appropriately relevant to the young people at the time.

The contrast between the survey of youth workers' views and the survey through young people renders them strong on policy, the youth work initiatives were best at action research and the youth work initiatives, superseded by the survey through young people best fulfil the youth work criteria.

Developing Youth Work Research

What has emerged is important differences between the perceptions of young people and of adults. The census of youth workers views, while producing a large data base which should have been good for making broad generalisations to guide policy was weak because it consulted youth workers amongst whom there was so much diversity of quantity and quality of contact with young people which was reflected in the outcomes. Furthermore, such a small proportion of them were professionally trained, had concentrated experience of young people and had breadth of knowledge of young people, that they did not reveal specialist expertise. To add insult to injury the outcomes of this piece of work were further discredited by the differences between youth workers views and those of young people themselves.

The particular strength of my surveys through young people, conducted in Norfolk and in Wakefield, was the quality of material achieved in relation to young

people and their lives. These were outcomes which made sense to young people themselves. They are sufficiently detailed for youth work to learn from them. The methods were reasonably systematic although sampling was then and is now an issue. The extent to which the sample represents the population is difficult to determine. More training of interviewers might ease this difficulty when employing the method in future.

The strength of the youth work initiatives was in highlighting features of the craft, providing insights into practice which neither young people nor youth workers had previously articulated. Reinforcement and the development of good practice initiated during this part of the research project occurred principally at local level.

For a long time I doubted the capacity of the research project to influence policy in Norfolk but I have been informed, unsolicited, by the Chief Education Officer, the new Principal Youth and Community Officer, a youth and community worker and a youth work volunteer, separately and independently, that the project has been highly influential at this level. The impact of the work in Wakefield is still to come.

There is scope for developing the method of working with young people to select interviewees, conduct the interviews and to be consulted on findings. The next stage, I think, is to engage with young people, subsequent to interpretation of outcomes If the subject matter of the survey were narrower and of interest to the involved young people, then I feel certain that they could be enabled to use the material obtained. There is clearly a gap in thinking between young people and adults. When young people are the subject of enquiry, the more involved young people are, the better the cultural quality of truth the material is likely to have. When youth work is the subject of enquiry, then both young people and youth workers have a part to play. I am tempted to say never ask "the experts", if the experts are assumed to be the youth workers, for clearly youth workers alone are not the experts. I reform this by

saying that the experts in youth work are young people and youth workers, whose views should be taken together, whenever practicable.

There are elements of youth work which are important in developing research methods which are compatible with general and specific youth cultures and in producing empirical material in young people's interests. It involves similar tasks, similar and additional techniques and it balances similar and additional tensions. So I call for youth work initiatives and surveys through young people, in effect for, youth work research, as I believe these to be approaches in keeping with the craft of youth work itself.

Policy Recommendations

This discussion of the policy potential of my research draws on the summary of findings and on the previous discussion of the issues which the findings raise. Policy recommendations relate to the work of the Youth Service and to the content of youth work training.

The first recommendation is concerned with young people's meeting places. The Youth Service should aim to provide safe meeting places for young people. Meeting places should be many and local and flexible in several respects. They need to be suitable for accommodating discrete groups; they need to be able to accommodate different groups of young people; they need to be acquired, when groups emerge and develop in particular communities, and disposed of, when the groups in that community no longer want to make use of them. Provision of this type needs to cater for relatively narrow age bands. It needs to be open long hours. Youth Services should make a firm commitment to finding ways of enabling young people to staff their own provision.

The statutory Youth Service should provide youth activities only where they are genuinely not available to (particular groups of) young people. Youth Services should, however, provide accessible, comprehensive information on what activities,

facilities and equipment are available to young people, on how to go about getting involved. They should fulfil a bridging role to enable young people to take advantage of what is available.

Youth Services should advocate on behalf of young people, with a view to increasing the number and range of facilities open to them and to encouraging commercial and public bodies to develop policies and practices which are acceptable to, even welcoming for, young people.

The Youth Service should engage more profoundly in peer provision. Peer education is now popular but ways of helping young people to help one another justifies significant exploration. Young people help of those people they know, who, they feel, understand them and whom they can trust. For many young people, only other young people are qualified.

The Youth Service should invest in the young person-adult relationship. The indications are, that part-time youth workers in particular, with their own, often long-standing relationships in the community, are better placed than most adults to establish the sort of relationships with young people, that young people find acceptable. This attribute that many part-time youth workers bring with them to youth work should be recognised, acknowledged and valued. The relationship is unlikely to develop on the strength of the very limited contact that some youth workers have with young people. There needs to be a re-newed emphasis on the role of full-time youth workers as people who spend the greater part of their working week, working directly with young people.

Evaluation of youth work should use both outcomes and identified process components as criteria. The outcomes are often long term and so are difficult and expensive to measure. The process components are clear. Youth workers with the mind to honest reflection can inform their work and improve their practise through evaluation in terms of this readily accessible source of criteria.

The Youth Service should develop a better corporate understanding of the imposition of organisation on community. This has implications for the ways in which Youth Service resources, mainly the youth workers themselves, are managed. Youth workers should be encouraged or pressured less to engage in work which takes them away from the community in which they work. The importance of the commitment youth workers make to their work should be acknowledged and ways of fostering this commitment must be found. The Youth Service should recognise the futility of substitution, when momentum has been lost, and cut its losses.

Youth work training needs to equip youth workers with a clear understanding of the nature of youth work. This research goes some way towards illuminating its tasks, techniques and tensions as well as offering more specific material relative to some youth work functions. Furthermore, training needs to enable youth workers to understand the importance, in young people's eyes, of the cultural differences between young people and adults and what adult attributes and behaviour are acceptable to young people. The tables in figures 9.1 to 9.9 inclusive and the knowledge, skill and attitude-based competencies which are derived from them could find their way into initial youth work training for both full and part-time youth workers.

Youth workers additionally need to be equipped with the skill to undertake the small pieces of research, like the youth work initiatives part of this research project, which have the capacity to inform their work, enhance their professionalism and increase their credibility.

The final recommendation is for the development of youth work research within the Youth Service - involving young people and youth workers - working in tandem with academic institutions - to encourage rigour in research methods. There is clearly a case for involving young people in both the investigation and the interpretation. The tightening economic strait-jacket is such that there is a tendency to cut corners and to be satisfied with anecdotal evidence. Since participatory research can also be youth work, as demonstrated in some of the youth work initiatives which

formed a part of this research project, there seems little justification for this. The approach which developed through the Norfolk and Wakefield projects has the scope to engage with young people further, for example, in involving young people after the interpretation of findings, in implementation of their recommendations. The Youth Service has to be supported with the best possible practice, management and training, but concern with empirical evidence on the degree to which young people can engage with their own service, in their own ways and on their own terms, must not be lost.

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NORFOLK´S YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

IN RELATION TO NEEDS AND DEMANDS

Proposal

A two year full-time formative process involving full-time and part-time staff and members of clubs.

Stage One

By April 1989

A review of leaders´ and members´ views of needs and demands, by survey, that is fed back to them.

Stage Two

By October 1989

Brief training in fieldwork and evaluation for leaders and members such that they undertake a survey beyond their clubs with regard to:

- voluntary sector needs,
- isolated young people,
- young people at risk;

with feedback to the County Council.

Stage Three

By April 1900

The identification of pockets of good practice:

- within the service,
- through inter-agency co-operation;

which can guide the procedures towards meeting needs and demands effectively;

with feedback to the County Council.

By October 1990

Final report on the three stages with provision/costs implications and projections.

Process in Diagrammatic Form

```
                                          TRAINING IN
                                          EVALUATION
                                                                    TRAINING IN
                                                                    PARTICIPATORY
                                                                    TECHNIQUES

   READ FEELING                    CONFIDENCE
   ABOUT YOUTH                     OF PRACTITIONERS                  Y.P. & Y.W.
(I) ADULTS (II) OTHER SERVICES                                      LOOK AT NEEDS
                                                                    NOT BEING MET
        COLLECT
PRACTITIONER INTELLIGENCE              FACILITATE                    PRIORITIES
   ON EXISTING POTENTIAL        PROCESS WHEREBY Y.P. & Y.W.
   LINKS WITHIN & BETWEEN          EXAMINE STRENGTHS OF
        SERVICES                        PROVISION

                                         DOCUMENT                      FOCUS
                                         & SHARE
INTER RELATED NETWORKS
AROUND ISSUES/CONCERNS                  RAISE PROFILE            FURTHER EVALUATION
      e.g. W.W.G.,
      Y.P. at RISK
```

Specific provisions to be considered.

- Steering Party from C.I.T., Business Consultancy and Youth and Community;
- Salary at J.N.C. Level 3 Points 3-7;
- Printing reports and training materials costs to be anticipated.

Colin Fletcher.

Dr. Colin Fletcher,
12th October, 1988.

NYCS

norfolk youth and community service

From: Isabel Atkinson
     NYCS Research Officer

Temporary Address
c/o Central Area Youth and Community Office
Shirehall House
Market Avenue
Norwich NR1 3JQ
Tel: Norwich (0603)   762068

Survey: People working with young people

    This survey is part of a two year research project sponsored by Norfolk County Council in conjunction with the Department of Social Policy, Cranfield Institute of Technology. Its purpose is to help the Youth and Community Service to make better provision for young people now and in the future.

    I hope that, in the next part of the project, some people, who work with young people in the county, will be interested in getting involved in the project by enabling young people to say what they feel their needs are and what they want the Norfolk Youth and Community Service to provide.

    Meanwhile, this part of the project is about workers' views. It is the chance for everyone, paid staff and volunteers, to express their feelings and ideas about what the youth and community service is doing or could do. It will also provide a general 'map' of what is going on to help with planning the next stage.

    All of the information supplied will be confidential to the research project. It will not be possible to identify, from the research report, any individual youth worker nor groups of young people.

    I am aware that many demands are made on your time, but I believe that this opportunity to influence provision in the long term is important, so I should be grateful if you could complete the questionnaire and put it in the post no later than:

Friday 30 June 1989

    The results of the survey will be sent, early in the autumn, to all those who have participated.

Isabel Atkinson

About your area:

1   How, in a few words, would you describe the community/locality in which you work?

   ....

   ....

2   Is it   (tick one box)

      rural?

      semi-rural?

      urban?

About your club or group:

If you work in more than one club or setting, please answer questions 3 to 6 with reference to the one you think of as your main setting.

3   What is the name of your youth club or youth group?

   ....

4   How often does it usually meet?

   ....

5   Is your club or group part of a bigger   Yes/No
   or wider organisation or movement?

6   If so, what is it called?

   ....

About the young people:

The next group of questions are asked twice, once on the yellow pages and again on the pink pages. Use the yellow pages to answer questions about the young people associated with your main youth club or group. If, within your main setting, there is more than one group, use the yellow pages for the main group.

7   Roughly what percentage of the regular attendance is female?

..............%

In answering these questions about the young people with whom you work, feel free to disregard those who are only marginally involved and then think about the majority (perhaps the most typical 3/4, rather than the least typical) of the regular attenders.

8   How old are the young people with whom you work?

(tick every appropriate box)

Under 11 years	
11 years	
12 years	
13 years	
14 years	
15 years	
16 years	
17 years	
18 years	
19 years	
Over 19 years	

The next question still refers to the majority of the young people.

9   Please put a tick in one of the boxes on each of the five rows.
     At each end of the row are terms with 'opposite' meanings: the
     more you think one of the terms fully descibes this group of
     young people, the closer to that end you should put your tick;
     and conversely with the other end. Tick the middle box only if
     you feel that the group overall is evenly balanced or you really
     cannot say.

middle class						working class

low achievers						high achievers

never in trouble						always in trouble

irresponsible						responsible

co-operative with adults						unco-operative with adults

10   No youth club or group is able to cater for all the young people
     in its locality. Please try to identify the main group(s) or
     type(s) of young people in your locality, for whom your club or
     group does not cater. Describe them briefly - what are they like,
     what do they want in their free time that the club or group does
     not provide? Enter 'none' if you can think of none.

     ....
     ....
     ....
     ....

The questions on the pink pages are repeats of some of those on the yellow pages. Please use the following group of questions to descibe the young people who are associated with a second club, group or youth work setting or to describe a second group of young people in your main setting.If neither of the above situations applies to your work with young people, please miss out questions 11 to 13 and turn to question 14 on page 7.

11   Roughly what percentage of the regular attendance is female?

............%

In answering these questions about the young people with whom you work, feel free to disregard those who are only marginally involved and then think about the majority (perhaps the most typical 3/4, rather than the least typical) of the regular attenders.

12   How old are the young people with whom you work?

(tick every appropriate box)

Under 11 years	
11 years	
12 years	
13 years	
14 years	
15 years	
16 years	
17 years	
18 years	
19 years	
Over 19 years	

The next question still refers to the majority of the young people.

13   Please put a tick in one of the boxes on each of the five rows.
      At each end of the row are terms with 'opposite' meanings: the
      more you think one of the terms fully descibes this group of
      young people, the closer to that end you should put your tick;
      and conversely with the other end. Tick the middle box only if
      you feel that the group overall is evenly balanced or you really
      cannot say.

middle class						working class

middle class   ☐☐☐☐☐   working class

low achievers   ☐☐☐☐☐   high achievers

never in trouble   ☐☐☐☐☐   always in trouble

irresponsible   ☐☐☐☐☐   responsible

co-operative with   ☐☐☐☐☐   unco-operative with
adults   adults

About needs:

This part of the questionnaire is concerned specifically with your beliefs. The next part of the research project will ask the young people themselves.

14 Disregarding once more those who are only marginally involved and thinking of the majority of young people in your main setting (the young people you described on the yellow pages) what, do you believe are the most important concerns facing young people?

....

....

....

15a Please think now about both the majority and any significant minority groups of young people associated with your club or group.

Tick these boxes if you believe that concerns listed are relevant for:

	a majority	a minority	and your club or group responds in some way
meeting friends	☐	☐	☐
meeting friendly adults	☐	☐	☐
sports and leisure activities	☐	☐	☐
arts/music events & experiences	☐	☐	☐
pursuing projects and other leisure time pursuits	☐	☐	☐
planning & managing own activities	☐	☐	☐
being part of a club/group	☐	☐	☐
contributing to the community	☐	☐	☐

15b Still thinking about the majority and significant minority groups,

tick these boxes if you believe that
the following 'problem issues'
directly affect:

	a majority	a minority	and your club or group responds in some way
Difficulty with school/college work	☐	☐	☐
Boredom in leisure time	☐	☐	☐
Getting and keeping a job	☐	☐	☐
Unemployment	☐	☐	☐
Unequal opportunities	☐	☐	☐
Difficulties with accommodation	☐	☐	☐
Transport/geographical isolation	☐	☐	☐
Problems at home	☐	☐	☐
Trouble at school	☐	☐	☐
Confusion with religious beliefs or spiritual development	☐	☐	☐
Difficult transition to adulthood	☐	☐	☐
Poor relationships with peers	☐	☐	☐
Anxiety about sex & sexuality	☐	☐	☐
Early parenthood	☐	☐	☐
Sexually transmitted diseases	☐	☐	☐
At risk of sexual abuse	☐	☐	☐
Misuse of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs	☐	☐	☐
Gambling/gaming machine addiction	☐	☐	☐
Debt or financial hardship	☐	☐	☐
Trouble with the law	☐	☐	☐

16 Now, please think more broadly about the Norfolk Youth and
    Community Service.

Tick these boxes if you believe that
the Youth and Community Service:

	should respond by	is strong in this area	needs to improve in this area
providing:			
places to meet friends	☐	☐	☐
friendly adults and the places to meet them	☐	☐	☐
sports/leisure activities	☐	☐	☐
arts/music events/experiences	☐	☐	☐
other youth activities	☐	☐	☐
a response to individual's problems	☐	☐	☐
facilitating:			
project work	☐	☐	☐
management by young people	☐	☐	☐
participation by young people in community activities	☐	☐	☐
responding to issues like:			
unemployment	☐	☐	☐
unequal opportunities	☐	☐	☐
young people's accommodation	☐	☐	☐
transport	☐	☐	☐
young people and sex	☐	☐	☐
drug abuse	☐	☐	☐
gambling	☐	☐	☐
financial difficulty	☐	☐	☐
young people and the law	☐	☐	☐
wider environmental issues	☐	☐	☐

17   Say briefly why you think the Service does not respond to all of
     the needs with which you are concerned and what you think would
     help it to do so more effectively.

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

About yourself:

17 As regards your youth work, are you

(tick one box)

voluntary?

part-time paid?

full-time?

18 Which age group do you belong to?

(tick one box)

Under 20

21 - 25

26 - 30

31 - 35

36 - 40

41 - 45

46 - 50

51 - 55

56 - 60

61 - 65

19 How many years, in total (i.e. not necessarily continuous), have you been involved in youth work?

....

Finally:

20   If there is a code number in the top right hand corner of page 1 of this questionnaire, it corresponds with your name and address on my mailing list. If there is no code number, then I do not have a record of your name and address and it would be helpful if you could write it below so that I can send you research project bulletins and the survey results. Please use the space also, if you want me to check that my records are accurate.
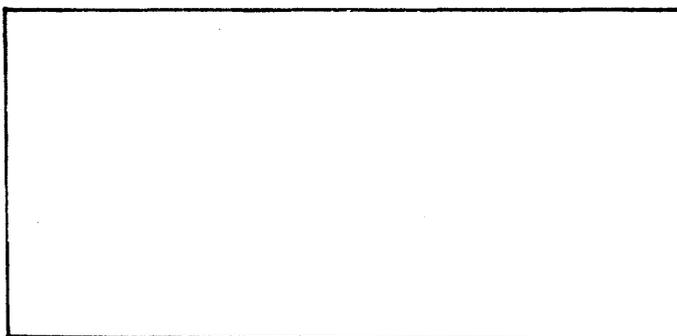
Thank you very much for your help in completing this questionnaire. Please put it in the post, marked 'private & confidential' no later than:

Friday 30 June 1989

to: Isabel Atkinson

NYCS Research Officer

c/o Central Area Youth and Community Office

Shirehall Chambers

Market Avenue

Norwich NR1 3JQ

NYCS

Appendix C

norfolk youth and community service
working with the department of social
policy, cranfield institute of technology

From: Isabel Atkinson

NYCS Research Project
Central Area Youth and Community Office
Shirehall House
Market Avenue
Norwich NR1 3JQ
Tel: Norwich (0603) 762068

Notes for Interviewers

1.   The Research Project aims to find out about young people's
needs and about how they learn. It is sponsored by the Norfolk Youth
and Community Service (NYCS) in conjunction with Cranfield Institute
of Technology. NYCS will use the results to help provide a better
service to young people. There are approximately 35 young
interviewers taking part in the Project. The 240 interviews are
being carried out by young people because it is felt that young people
will give more honest answers to young people than to adults and
because the Youth Service believes in involving young people in as
many stages of the Project as possible.

2.   There are between 2 and 5 interviewers working in each of
10 areas in Norfolk.

3.   Choose the person you are going to interview, as follows.

I assume that you know, for certain, his/her gender. Next
check that

(i)   s/he is the right age,

(ii)   s/he lives inside the area marked on your map(s)

(iii)   if aged 16 or over has the right occupation.

There are some other characteristics to think about:

(i)   If you have any friends who are black.   I should very much like to include their views in this survey, provided that they are the right age and gender.

(ii)   Do not interview more than one person aged 18 or 19 who is still in full-time education.   You may know quite a few people like this but they are unusual in that only about 15 out of every hundred young people continue in education beyond the aged of 18, so I do not want more than 36 out of the 240 to be interviewed.

(iii)   Most of the interviewers came to me from youth clubs and youth organisations, but in the survey I want the views of people who have never been to clubs and groups as well as those who have, so try to choose some people who, as far as you know, don't join this kind of organisation.

4.   No-one is obliged to co-operate with an interview.   When you have someone in mind, explain to him or her what it is all about.   Make sure s/he realises that s/he does not need to be an 'expert' or to 'know the right answers'.   Make it clear that you will carry out the interview at a time which is convenient for him or her.   It is still the person's right to refuse, so do not be offended if this is what happ

5.   Some people exagerate, tell lies or give foolish answers when they are being interviewed.   If you think this is happening, try to prevent it but if it continues, you may need to do one of two things.

> (i)   If it is just in one or two places, make a note on the back of the schedule, for example:

> 'I think the answer to question 11 is an exageration'.

> (ii)   If it is all the way through, finish the interview as quickly as possible and try to find someone else to interview instead.

6.   Never let anyone read the interview schedule before or after s/he is interviewed.   If anyone asks to read it, explain that it is really only a set of notes to help you ask the right questions.

Isabel Atkinson   1st November 1990

Notes for Interviewers   Page 3

7.   Try to sit opposite the person you are interviewing, so that
they cannot read it over your shoulder nor see what you are writing down.

8.   Try to carry out the interview in private. It might be difficult
for the person you are interviewing if other people are listening.

9.   Record answers as the person you are interviewing talks. Use
a pencil rather than a pen. Check the schedule before you finish the
interview to make sure you have not missed anything out. Check it as
soon as possible afterwards to make sure I will be able to read it.
Check it again the next day to make sure it makes sense.

10.   Never repeat anything which is said to you in an interview.
If anyone says anything which worries you, please telephone me rather
than tell anyone else.

11.   If you are intending to carry out your interviews at school,
at work or anywhere where there are adults "in charge", it is polite
to ask if you may.   Show your letter of authorisation if necessary.
If you want me to I can telephone and ask permission on your behalf.
Please let me know if you think this will help.   If you are interviewing
one of the younger people, you may think they should ask at home,
before being interviewed. Suggest this to them, if you think it is
necessary.

12.   Record anything unusual on the back of the interview schedule
before sending it to me, for example:

        'This respondent insisted on keeping her friend with her'.

13.   Try to record what is said rather than recording what you
think was said!

14.   If, for any reason, you have not been able to carry out your
interviews, please do not be tempted to make up the answers because
it will destroy this piece of research.

15.   Remember to take with you, for each interview, a clean schedule,
a pencil (and a sharpener or a spare), and your showcards in the
right order.

Isobel Atkinson   1st November 1990

16.   Carry out one interview as soon as possible and send it, along with the completed 'Interviewer Details' sheet.   I will check it.   If all is well, I shall then send you the remaining schedules and envelopes. If I think there is a problem, I shall give you a ring and go over the problems with you.

17.   Send in all the other schedules the day following the interview.

18.   When you have completed all of the interviews you have agreed to do, send in your 'Expenses Claim' form, with your last interview schedule.   Deadline Monday 17th December 1990.

19.   Interviewing is difficult, so do not be disheartened if it does not go smoothly.   It probably is not your fault.

20.   If in doubt or in trouble, please do not hesitate to telephone me, I shall be very pleased to hear from you, to chat with you and to help if you need it.

NYCS

norfolk youth and community service

working with the department of social

policy, cranfield institute of technology

From: Isabel Atkinson

NYCS Research Project
Central Area Youth and Community Office
Shirehall House
Market Avenue
Norwich NR1 3JQ
Tel: Norwich (0603) 762068

This is to certify that

is taking part in a Research Project sponsored by Norfolk Youth
and Community Service, in conjunction with Cranfield Institute
of Technology.   S/he will be conducting a small number of
interviews with his/her own friends or associates who are aged
14 to 19 years.   These will take place between 1st November
and Christmas 1990.

The Project aims to provide NYCS with information about young
people's needs and about how they learn in informal settings.
NYCS will use this information to build on and improve its service
to young people.

ISABEL ATKINSON

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
County Education Officer: MICHAEL H. EDWARDS BA

A- NYCS4

Allocation of Respondents

Name of Interviewer_____

Area_____

Card No.	Age	Gender	Occupation (if any)

Allocation of Respondents

Name of Interviewer_____

Area_____

Card No.	Age	Gender	Occupation (if any)

Introduction to Interview Schedule

This survey is being carried out by the Norfolk Youth and Community Service.

There are about 35 interviewers and we each have to interview a few of the people we know.   I have asked you because you are _____(e.g. male and aged 14).

We are trying to find out what young people want and need from the Youth Service.

You don't have to take part if you don't want to.   If you take part you don't have to answer all the questions, but it is very important that I collect as much information as possible.

Nothing you say will be repeated to anyone else, so please be as honest as you can.

This interview will take about half an hour.

Interviewer Expenses Claim

Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

Tel. No._____

I have now completed _____(number) interviews and claim
expenses of £5 per interview.

Total £_____

In addition, I claim the following travelling expenses.

Date	Journey from and to	Cost

Total travelling costs £_____.

I should like to be paid by cheque/in cash*

*Delete as appropriate

Signature_____

Date_____

Young People and Youth Work Survey

(Complete questions 1 - 5 before starting the interview)

1.   Interviewer name _____

2.   Date of Interview_____

3.   Venue of interview

		(tick one box)
Interviewer's home	1	[ ]
Respondent's home	2	[ ]
School, college	3	[ ]
Work, government training scheme	4	[ ]
Youth group	5	[ ]
Other	6	[ ]

4.   Respondent's age

(tick one box)

14	[ ]
15	[ ]
16	[ ]
17	[ ]
18	[ ]
19	[ ]

5.   Respondent's gender

(tick one box)

Male	[ ]
Female	[ ]

6.   **Which of these best describes your occupation?**

(tick one box)

School   [ ]

6th form college   [ ]

Further education college   [ ]

Polytechnic, university

or college of higher education   [ ]

Unemployed   [ ]

Government scheme   [ ]

Work   [ ]

Other   [ ]

7.   **Would you say that you live in**

(tick one box)

the city or suburbs,   [ ]

a town   [ ]

a village, or   [ ]

in the countryside?   [ ]

8.   (Use Showcard 1)

Which of these descriptions suits you best?

(tick one box)

Afro-Caribbean   1   [ ]

Asian   2   [ ]

Mixed race   3   [ ]

U.K. black   4   [ ]

U.K. white   5   [ ]

Other   6   [ ]

Don't know   7   [ ]

2.

9. Are there any clubs or groups or activities especially
    for <u>young people</u> that you regularly go to now, or that
    you have regularly been to in the past?

    (tick one box)

    Yes   [   ]

    No   [   ]

    (IF NO, GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 13)

10. What kind of things are these?

    (tick as many boxes as appropriate)

    Youth club or group   [   ]
    Uniformed organisation   [   ]
    School/college club   [   ]
    Sports club   [   ]
    Hobby club   [   ]
    Social   [   ]
    Voluntary work   [   ]
    Other   [   ]

11. At what age would you say you joined [the first of these]?

    ----

12. Are you still involved in any of them?

    (tick one box)
    Yes   [   ]
    No   [   ]

    (IF YES, GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 13)

    (IF NO)

    At what age would you say your involvement ended?

    ----

13.   Is there any organised activity, sport or hobby that you
        would <u>like</u> to do but <u>can't</u>?

                                        (tick one box)
                                        Yes   [   ]
                                        No   [   ]

                (IF NO, GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 14)

                (IF YES)

What's that?_____

<u>Why</u> can't you do it?_____

_____

14.   Do you sometimes find that you want to be with your friends
        but can find no suitable place?

                                        (tick one box)
                                        Yes   [   ]
                                        No   [   ]

                (IF NO)

Where <u>do</u> you go to to meet your friends?

_____

_____

                (IF YES)

What sort of place <u>would</u> be suitable?

_____

_____

                                                            4.

15.　(Use Showcard Set 2)

Have a look at this set of cards.　Take a few minutes
to read through them.　(Pause)

Please ignore, for now, the number on each card and
place the cards in order of <u>importance to you</u>.　Put the
most important at the top and the least important at the
bottom.　Take as much time as you need.

(When finished)　Please now read the numbers on the
cards back to me, starting with the <u>most</u> important?

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

[　]

16.   Now divide the set into two piles, one of things you feel
      you <u>want</u> and one of things you feel you <u>need</u>.   The order
      within each pile does not matter.   Take your time.

      (When finished) Starting with the pile of <u>wants</u> please
      read the numbers on the cards back to me.

                           WANTS   [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]

                           NEEDS   [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]
                                          [   ]

17.   **Think of a good friend of yours, someone about the same age as yourself.   What would you say, is his or her greatest anxiety in life?   What most often occupies his or her thoughts?   Don't give me any names.**

(Write 2 or 3 sentences, explaining what the problem is and how the friend deals with it.   Prompt if you need to.)

----

18.   (Use Showcard 3)

Here is a list of things that might have happened to you, <u>outside school or college</u>, in the last year or two.

(Pause)

Please choose just one of the situations in the list and tell me about it in your own words.

I need to know: what happened
                  when it happened and
                  where it happened;   (short pause)

                  how it came about
                  who else was involved
                  what you did and
                  what they did;   (short pause)

                  how you felt about it,
                  whether you think you learned anything
                  and whether you think you have changed
                  as a result.

(Write 5 or 6 sentences explaining the incident described to you.   Prompt if you need to, to get all the information.)

----

19. **Outside your family, and without saying any names, do you know any adults who you think understand, <u>better than other adults</u>, the way young people <u>think</u> and <u>behave</u>?**

                                        (tick one box)

                                        Yes   [   ]
                                        No   [   ]

            (IF NO, GO TO THE END)

            (IF YES)

(a)   **Thinking about just <u>one person</u> like this, that you know, is it a <u>man</u> or a <u>woman</u>?**

                                        (tick one box)

                                        Man   [   ]
                                        Woman   [   ]

(b)   **How old would you say s/he is?** _____

(c)   (Use Showcard 4)

Which of these best describes the person you have in mind? You can say more than one of these, if the person you are thinking of is more than one of these <u>to you</u>.

                            (tick as many boxes as appropriate)

            Teacher, social worker, youth worker   1   [   ]
            Friend of your family   2   [   ]
            Someone who lives or works nearby   3   [   ]
            Friend or relative of a friend
            of yours   4   [   ]
            Someone at work   5   [   ]
            Other   6   [   ]

(IF OTHER)   Can you tell me what this person
             is to you? _____

9.

(d)   **What is it that makes you think this person**
      understands the concerns of young people like
      yourself?

(Write down one of two sentences, explaining how this
person is different or behaves differently from other
adults. Prompt if you need to.)

Thank you very much for taking
part in this survey.

SHOWCARD   1

Afro-Caribbean	1
Asian	2
Mixed race	3
U.K. black	4
U.K. white	5
Other	6
Don't know	7

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SHOWCARD SET 2

To be taken seriously

1.

SHOWCARD SET 2

Something interesting to do

2.

SHOWCARD SET 2

To have one good friend

3.

SHOWCARD SET 2

Self-respect

4.

SHOWCARD SET 2

To learn more about myself

5.

SHOWCARD SET 2

Something to look forward to

6.

SHOWCARD SET 2

To be part of a group
of friends

7.

SHOWCARD SET 2

Someone to love who
loves me

8.

311

SHOWCARD SET 2

To be allowed to make
my own decisions

9.

SHOWCARD SET 2

To enjoy myself

10.

SHOWCARD SET 2

To be treated with respect

11.

SHOWCARD SET 2

A place I belong

12.

SHOWCARD SET 2

To feel really good, in
myself, about something

13.

SHOWCARD SET 2

To be valued for who I am

14.

SHOWCARD SET 2

To face challenges

15.

SHOWCARD 3

You felt powerful
You made a decision
You decided to get involved in something
You felt your contribution was valued
You learned something about yourself
You took responsibility for something
You understood the behaviour of another
person or group of people

SHOWCARD 4

Teacher, social worker, youth worker   1

Friend of your family   2

Someone who lives or works nearby   3

Friend or relative of a friend of yours   4

Someone at work   5

Other   6

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Bulletin * Bulletin * Bulletin * _____. * Bulletin * Bulletin *
Bulletin * Bulletin * Bulletin * Bulletin * Bulletin * Bulletin *

NYCS RESEARCH PROJECT BULLETIN NO. 3 JULY '90

A Survey of the Views of Youth Workers:
feedback to the people who took part (1)

Appendix E

This survey was conducted during 1989 to find out what youth workers in Norfolk believe the needs of young people to be.   I attempted to contact all adults working with young people in county centres and divisional youth clubs. It is difficult to say how successful I was in this attempt. Suffice to say that a contact list numbering 563 was created and 265 completed responses (51%) were included in the analysis.

The survey of workers' views is just one part of a bigger research project into the needs of Norfolk's young people.   Findings reported here are one part of the picture.

So, who took part in the survey? The respondent group can be divided by role in the Service: 10% full-time, 43% part-time paid and 47% voluntary workers. Paid workers are over-represented, compared to the list of all workers, while volunteers are under-represented.

The group can also be divided by gender: 55% men and 45% women. My best estimate of the percentage of women in the contact list is 52%, so women are slightly under-represented here. Only 8 out of 31 full-time staff in post were women, so the women were clearly located in the part-time paid and voluntary positions.

Respondents' Role in the Service
262 cases

Part-time paid 43%

Full-time 10%

Voluntary 47%
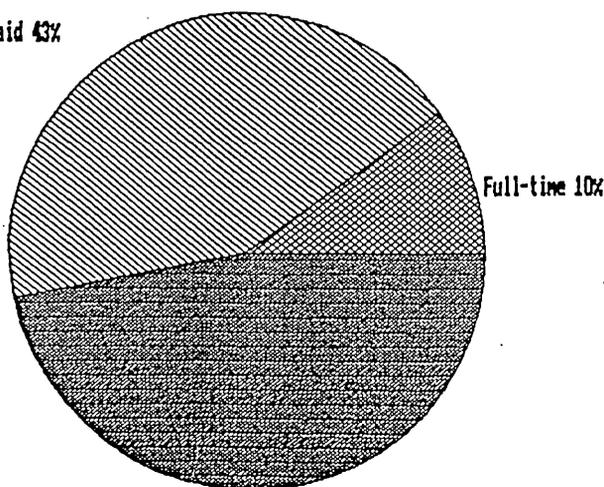
Respondents' Gender
229 cases

Men 55%
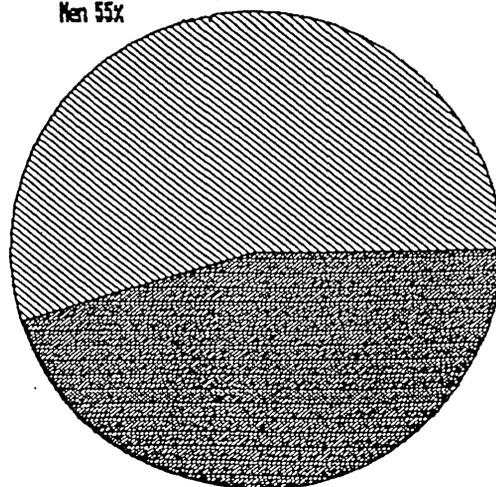
Women 45%

The ages of respondents are well spread, with just over half aged between 31 and 45, and an average (mean) age of 37 years. I found this surprisingly high, so I wondered whether young workers had been excluded somehow, but 10% of the respondents were aged 20 and under, reflecting the transition made by some young people from member to worker status nd the pattern here reflects my informal observations of the service.

The youth workers in the survey had, between them, a wealth of experience. The average (mean) length of experience was just under 10 years. Over 16% recorded 19½ years' experience or more. By contrast, almost 16% recorded less than 18 months' experience and a total of 39% recorded less than 4½ years' experience in youth work.

Respondents' Experience in Youth Work
251 cases

Respondents' Ages
261 cases
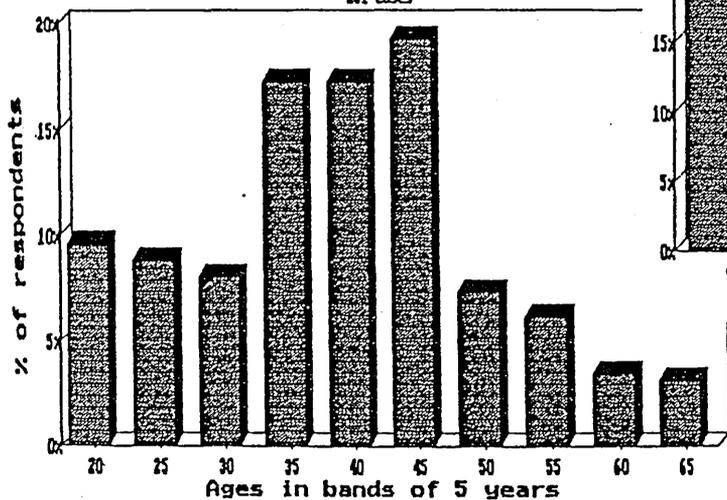
[No. indicates upper limit of each band].
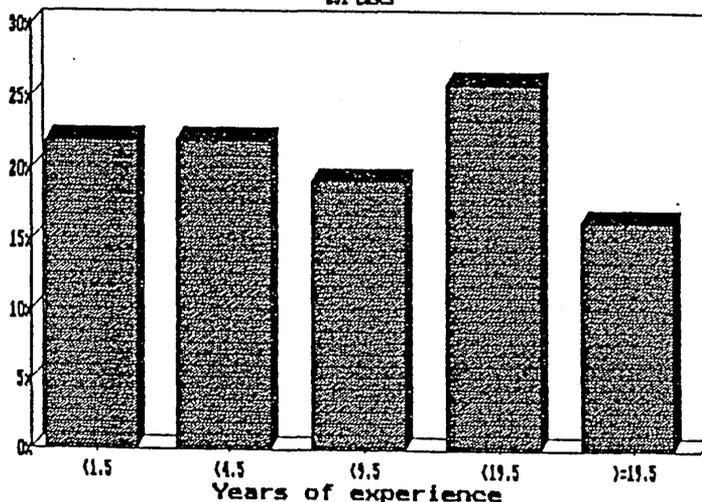
Next issue: Which young people are we working with?

NYCS RESEARCH PROJECT BULLETIN NO. 4 August 90

A Survey of the Views of Youth Workers:

feedback to the people who took part (2)

The intention of this edition of the research project bulletin is to report back some initial findings from the survey of youth workers' views undertaken in 1989. It is particularly about the young people with whom the service is working. It is however important to remember that this is not a survey of provision and does not provide an accurate picture of all of the young people in the Norfolk Youth and Community Service. Rather it provides a collective picture of the majority of the regular attenders of the groups that workers regard as their main groups.

Workers were asked to indicate the age range of their regular attenders. The average lower age was 12½ years commonly varying between 11 and 13 years. The average upper age was 16½ years although this commonly varied between 15 and 19 years. The young people were therefore typically aged 12½ to 16½ years and I would take 14½ years as the average age of attenders.

Workers were asked to give the percentage of regular female attenders. The average percentage of regular female participants was 40%. Just over 2% (six workers) regarded boys only groups as their main groups. No one regarded girls only groups as their main groups. Girls were in a minority in almost two thirds of the groups described here.

Percentage of Regular Female Attendance

Percentage of responses

Percentage of girls/young women in youth groups

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NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Workers described the social class, level of achievement, tendency towards trouble, sense of responsibility and level of cooperation of the young people with whom they were working. They portrayed them as more working class than middle class and as middling rather than high or low achievers. This sounds representative of all young people in Norfolk. The workers also saw the young people as less rather than more likely to find themselves in trouble and leaning towards the responsible and towards the cooperative. On these three scales the image is on the positive side. Few workers claimed to be working with groups of young people who were generally difficult or in trouble.

Social Class
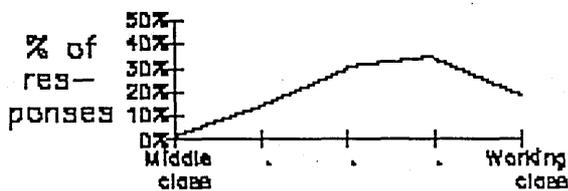
Achievement Level
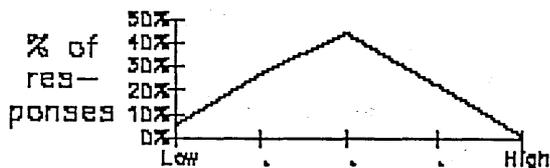
Tendency towards Trouble
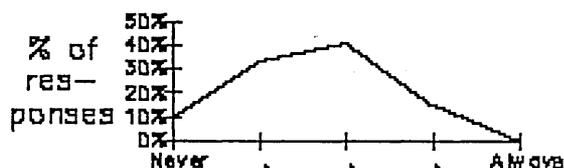
Responsibility Level
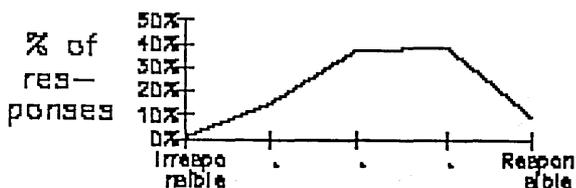
Co-operation
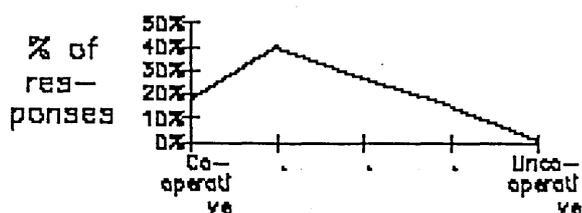
Workers were then given the option of answering the questions again with reference to a subsidiary group, sub-group or setting. Approximately 100 workers took this option. I wondered at the outset whether the second groups were in some way complementary or at least different to first groups or whether they would be very similar as if dictated by the neighbourhood in which the club was located. The correlations between the age gender and social characteristics of young people in main and in subsidiary groups indicate that in almost every respect the groups were very similar.

from Isabel Atkinson, NYCS Research Project,
Shirehall House, Market Avenue, Norwich NR1 3JQ.

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NYCS RESEARCH PROJECT BULLETIN NO.5 September '90

A Survey of the Views of Youth Workers:

feedback to the people who took part (3)

Respondents were asked a few questions about their own youth groups. Over fifty percent of workers in the survey met their young people no more than once per week. This reinforces the forgotten concept of limited contact time.

Workers were asked whether their clubs were part of wider youth organisations or movements. Two thirds of those who answered the question (251 workers) perceived themselves as part of a broader youth organisation or movement. Of 173 workers, over

75% perceived themselves as part of NYCS, 11% as part of churches or church-based youth movements, 1% listed Youth Clubs U.K. as their first affiliation and 11% gave other answers to this question. NYCS clearly has in this respect a strong identity.

Relative Frequency of Youth Group Meetings

Percentage of responses (y-axis: 0% to 50%)

Meetings per week (x-axis: < 1, 1 < 2, 2 < 3, 3 < 4, 4 < 5, 5 < 6, 6 < 7, >—7)

Workers were also asked for their views on the role of the service and for an evaluative comment on each of the suggested roles. They were presented with a list of 19 potential roles for the Service. These were

providing:
    places to meet friends
    friendly adults and the
    places to meet them
    sports/leisure activities
    arts/music events/
    experiences
    other youth activities

a response to individuals' problems

facilitating:
    project work
    management by young people
    participation by young
    people in community
    activities

responding to issues like:
    unemployment
    unequal opportunities
    young peoples' accommo-
    dation
    transport
    young people and sex

    drug abuse
    gambling
    financial difficulty
    young people and the law
    wider environmental issue

They were asked with reference to each whether they believed the service should respond in this area. No less than 30% and no more than 39% said that the Service had a role in any one of the suggested capacitie This is unexpected and I canno at present offer an explanatio

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NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Workers' Evaluation of the Service

⊠ Strong

⊟ Neutral

☐ Needs to Improve

Percentage of responses

Using the same reference points, respondents were asked whether they believed that the Service was strong or whether it needed to improve. The responses were eventually coded on a scale of three points from 'already strong' through a neutral position to 'needs to improve'.

On each of the 19 possible roles, a large minority, at least a third, felt the Service needed to improve and this reached a majority (50-60%) on a few

roles: 'providing arts experiences', 'facilitating participation' and 'responding to wider environmental issues'. Generally there was no difference between the clusters of roles – providing, facilitating and responding to issues – in the proportion of respondents who said improvement was needed. Since the three differed in the ratings of current Service strength, they also differed in the residual 'neutral' response. Thus, in the three roles which received most assent

to current strength – 'provid meeting places', 'friendly adults' and 'sports/leisure activities' – there were fewe neutral responses. This may a way of affirming the import of these roles for the Servic If it is not strong then it needs to improve. By contras on most of the issues, 40-50% or respondents declined to sa that the Service was strong and also declined to urge improvement, as if to say tha it did not matter.

from Isabel Atkinson NYCS Research Project,
Shirehall House, Market Avenue, Norwich NR1 3JQ.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WAKEFIELD YOUTH SERVICE

Towards the end of 1991, I was appointed District Youth Officer (DYO) with the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council (MDC) Youth Service and the experience of the Norfolk Research Project was influential in my being offered the interview. There were three main elements to the post: management of a geographical patch of neighbourhood provision; development of particular aspects of provision across the Metropolitan District; and a contribution to the in-house initial and in-service training programmes.

The Principal Youth Officer (PYO) was himself a new appointee, preceding my arrival in Wakefield by a mere five months. He had not wasted his time. The process of review was under-way. In the middle of 1991, prior to my appointment, the Service had established its purpose and objectives. At a conference of Wakefield's full-time staff team, in November 1991, a number of working parties were established. The task was to articulate the strategies by which the objectives were to be achieved. The first of the nine Youth Service objectives is:

> *To identify and respond with flexibility to the changing needs of young people within a local community context.*
> (Wakefield Youth Service, 1991)

The "needs" working party came to the conclusion that a research project was necessary and approached Leeds Polytechnic, now Leeds Metropolitan University, for help. A member of the academic staff there was initially interested, but his interest waned fairly rapidly and before any firm plans had been laid. The PYO then asked me to join the group to share some of my research experience.

Strategy

Like the Norfolk contingent, the group really did not know what it wanted to know, not, at least, in the form of a question which could be answered. The needs of young people is a sort of shorthand for nothing and for everything. I sought the advice of the PYO who said that any part of the Norfolk study would be useful. I presented the "needs" group with the option of either the youth work initiatives or the survey of young people. The members of the group lacked confidence in their own knowledge on which to base a decision and pushed the decision to be made back to me. Recognising that in my capacity as a manager of the Service, rather than as a pure researcher, I might be able to better facilitate youth work projects with a research theme, I was concerned about the frighteningly predictable rate of failure of the projects in Norfolk. I did not then think that I had fathomed the reasons for their collapse and devised a means of avoiding a repeat performance.

My favourite part of the Norfolk study was the survey through young people. I felt that it had produced high quality material and could be relied upon to do so again. I felt that engagement with the project had been a positive learning experience for the young people who had been interviewers. I felt that, both in its content and through its method, it had started to get at something which was worth developing. I felt that with this heaven sent opportunity for hindsight, it could be extended and improved.

Question

The "needs" group and I brain-stormed the areas of interest but we did not come up with anything radically different from the Norfolk version. The questions about involvement in youth organisations were adapted to include more information which was of interest to members of the "needs" group. The questions about acceptable adults were extended to explore some of the numerically insignificant but interesting findings of the Norfolk study. The questions around the ways that young people deal with their preoccupations and anxieties and about their learning

experiences were re-phrased in small ways, to increase the number of useful answers to each. The questions based on Maslow's hierarchy (1981) were excluded as the findings from Norfolk had been mildly interesting but not particularly useful to youth work. The Maslow questions were sacrificed to extend the area around acceptable adults and to the more precise questioning concerning preoccupying issues and learning experiences.

The Interviewers

There were 37 interviewers, almost all of whom were aged between 16 and 19 years and just over half of whom were male. Half were in full-time education and half had left, at least for the time being. About two thirds of them were involved in youth organisations and a third were not. Again, some thought was given to the extent to which the interviewers should reflect proportionately the characteristics sought amongst the young people to be interviewed, especially in respect of gender. The choice of young people in the right age group, in the right locations, who were interested and had time to complete the project, was limited, so all those who expressed an interest were encouraged and the possibilities for being selective were not dwelled upon.

Young people's initial interest in the project was secured by youth workers. In most cases, the young person's expression of interest was followed by an information giving telephone call from me and this was followed by a group training session. There were four such sessions, each catering for different young people at different locations in the District. Here, I met the interviewers for the first time, considered some of the practical and the ethical issues of social research and interviewers learned how to handle the project's interview schedule.

The interviewers were paid per completed interview. They were supported in their task mostly through regular telephone calls, but where the youth workers were

particularly interested or conscientious, they were also supported by the youth workers who knew them.

The Sample of Young People

The sampling sought an even spread of young people across the Youth Service priority age range of 13 to 19 years, with each year group split equally by gender. For those who had passed the age of school leaving, it sought a representative mix of those in and out of full-time education. There were no quotas in respect of either social class or race but the interviewers were given guide-lines to promote diversity within the sample. Three Asian interviewers (two male and one female) had been recruited to ensure access to young people in Wakefield's Asian community.

A sample of seven electoral wards was randomly drawn from across the District, to ensure that the different types of community in the District - the City of Wakefield itself, the other towns in the District, the residential areas and the communities with strong mining identities - were proportionately represented.

There were up to seven interviewers in each locality in the sample, and they, themselves, selected the young people they interviewed from amongst their acquaintances, according to quotas of age, gender, occupation and bearing in mind guide-lines on race in particular.

Process

The interviews took place from October to mid-December 1992, by which time 241 of a possible 280 interviews had been completed, by comparison with 201 of 240 in Norfolk. The research had been conducted without academic supervision so, at my request, the service employed a consultant for two days to help with and check my statistical analysis.

The initial analysis was completed when a small group of the interviewers came together again as consultants upon interpretation of the findings. Of each of the

findings, the first questions the group was asked were, 'Can you believe it? Does it sound right to you?' We went on to discuss possible explanations for the findings which had emerged. This represents an extension of the method first employed in Norfolk. This was a project whose design was informed by young people, in which the interviews were carried out by young people and in which young people were involved in the interpretation of findings.

The young people's interpretations were combined with mine in the draft report which was discussed by all four full team meetings of youth workers in September 1992, by the committees to which the Service reports and by the full Education Committee in November 1993. It was received well by the committees but rather less politely by two of the four staff teams. Following discussion of the report at Education Committee, the research report received local radio and press coverage. (See Appendix G.)

Young People in the Sample

The ages of the young people in the sample were fairly evenly spread across the 13 to 19 Youth Service priority age range; the mean age of young people in the sample was thus 16 and a half years. The sample was just over half (54%) male.

Just over three fifths (63%) of the young people were in full-time education, a fifth (20%) were unemployed or on schemes and just under a fifth (17%) were in work. Those at work were, on average, marginally older than those who were unemployed or on schemes.

Young people's average age by occupation	
	Average Ages (years)
In full-time education	15.6
Unemployed/on schemes	18.0
At work	18.3

The sampling locations were selected to proportionately represent the main types of community in the Metropolitan District of Wakefield: 44% of responses came from suburban residential areas, 32% from communities with strong mining identities and the remaining 24% from inner urban areas.

There was, additionally, an opportunity for young people to say whether they felt they lived in the city, in a town or in a village. This resulted in half the sample describing home as in the towns, and a quarter each in the villages and in the city of Wakefield itself. Since few wards are homogenous in nature, the young people's self-classification is more useful for determining the presence or absence of differences relative to geographical factors.
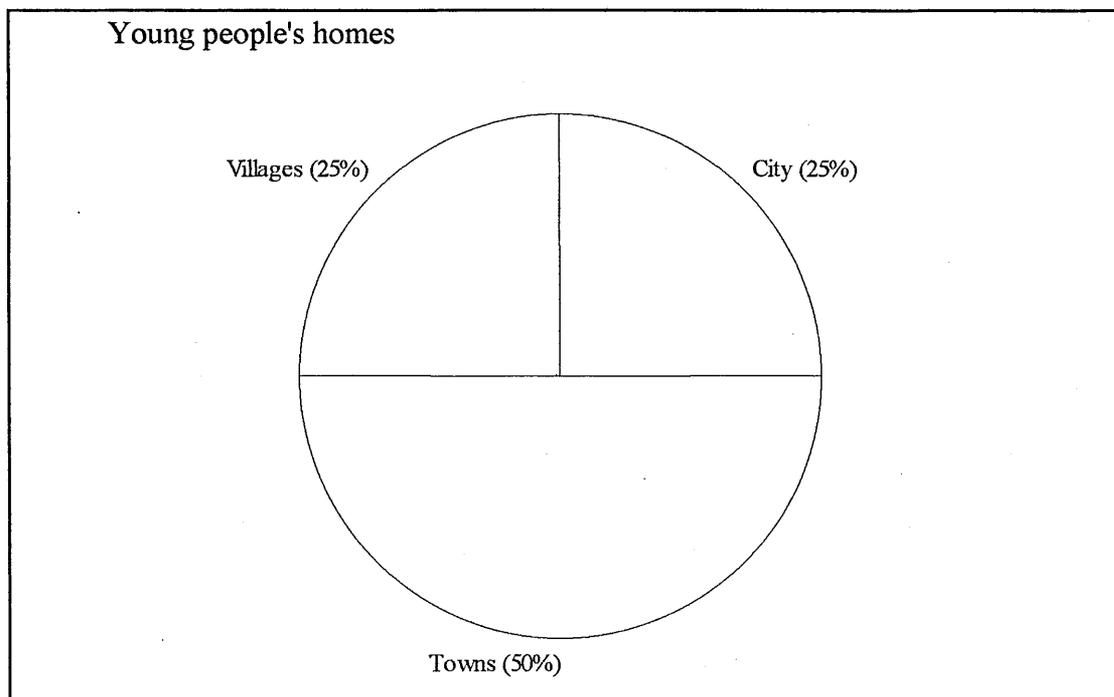
Around four fifths of the sample described itself as 'U.K.white', the bulk of the remainder as Asian. A disproportionate number of Asian young people in relation to the youth population, Asian young men as it turned out, were included in the sample (22 of 241 young people or 9%), in order to investigate differences which might influence the style of service offered.

Young people's race

Other (5%)   Asian (9%)

UK white (86%)
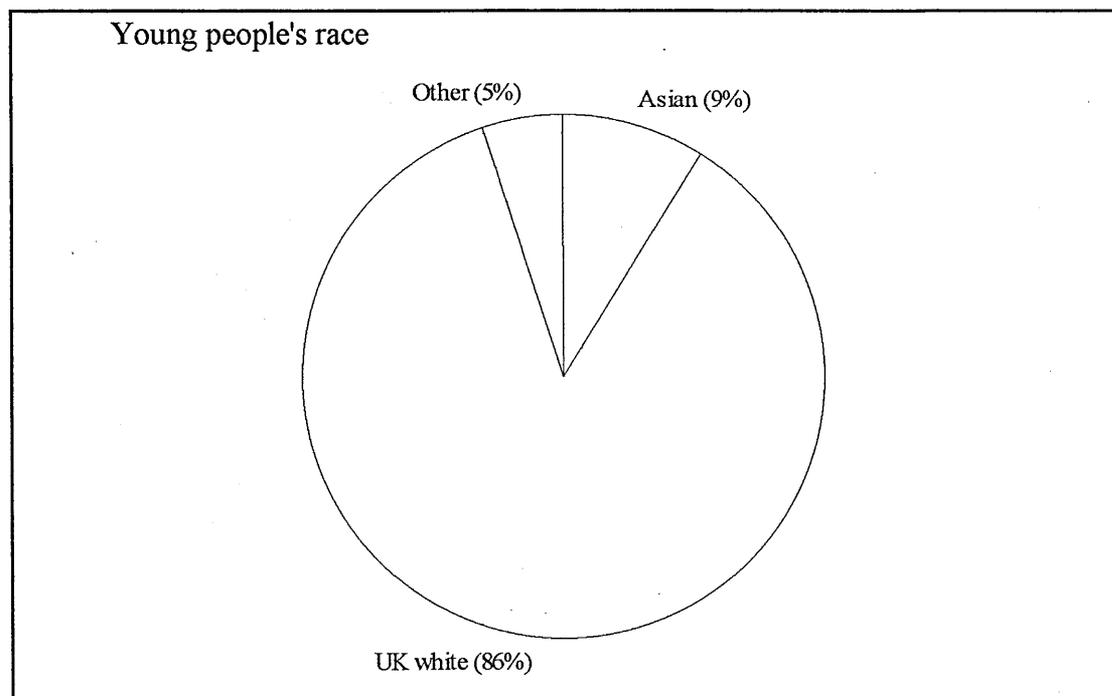
A third of the young people in the sample were involved in youth clubs at the time of the survey. This is an over-representation but the sample nevertheless includes the views of many young people who were not involved.

In respect of the ages, gender, race, occupation and home locality of the Wakefield young people, it is possible to compare them with the Norfolk cohort. The age range in Wakefield was 13 to 19, rather than 14 to 19, reflecting the difference in the priority age ranges of the two Services. The Wakefield cohort was, on average, five months younger than the Norfolk one. The Wakefield sample was rather less evenly balanced by gender than was the Norfolk one, with 54% rather than 50% male respondents. In describing their race, 86% of the Wakefield young people described themselves as 'UK white' in contrast to the 92% of Norfolk young people who described themselves in this way. No accurate statistics of the race of members of people living in England and Wales exist, but the difference here seems likely to reflect the presence of a small but identifiable Asian community in Wakefield where no such community existed in Norfolk.

Occupation of young people in Wakefield and Norfolk samples		
	Wakefield %	Norfolk %
School	43	41
Tertiary Education	19	14
Unemployed	13	5
YT Schemes	7	4
Work	17	36

There were many more young people in work in Norfolk in 1990 than in Wakefield in 1992. The greatest proportion of the difference were, in Wakefield, unemployed with smaller proportions engaged in the other options.

Young people in full-time education in Wakefield and Norfolk samples		
	Wakefield %	Norfolk %
Up to 15 years of age	100	100
16 and 17 years	44	53
18 and 19 years	28	9

More young people, beyond the age of statutory school leaving were in full-time education in Wakefield than in Norfolk.

Age by occupation in Wakefield and Norfolk samples		
	Mean Age of Young People	
	Wakefield	Norfolk
Full-time education	15.6	15.7
Unemployed/YT Schemes	18.0	18.4
Work	18.3	18.2

Proper employment was marginally more common amongst 16 and 17 year olds in Norfolk than it was in Wakefield but a higher proportion of the unemployed young people in Norfolk were aged 18 and 19. The difference is fairly small but the picture in

Wakefield is of unemployment as more common and as a more transitory phenomenon within the age group than in Norfolk.

Home locality of young people in Wakefield and Norfolk		
	Wakefield %	Norfolk %
Towns	50	38
Villages and countryside	25	42
City	25	20

The Wakefield cohort was clearly more urban than its Norfolk counterpart but comparatively few young people, in both areas, perceived themselves as living in the cities themselves. The cohorts were not so different from one another as might have been guessed, in this respect at least.

Meeting Places

Almost three fifths (58%) of the sample said they found no difficulty in finding places to meet friends. Up to two different meeting places were recorded from these young people.

Young people's meeting places	
	Young People %
One another's homes	54
Pub, nightclub or social club	27
On the streets	25
At the youth club	25

There are some differences between sub-groups in the sample in respect of the places mentioned. Those who were meeting at the pub were likely to be in the older age

group and to be working . The youth clubs were much more popular with young

people of school age than with the rest .

9.9 Usual meeting places by young people's age group (chi-squared test)				
	13-15 yrs. %	16-17 yrs. %	18-19 yrs %	Significance Level
Pub	2	27	55	.0000
Youth Club	37	13	13	.0055

Young people meeting at the pub by their occupation (chi-squared test)			
FTE %	Unemp./ schemes %	Work %	Significance Level
17	32	54	.0001

Some of the young people clearly mentioned more than one of the listed

venues and a further 23% gave a variety of others.

Around two fifths (42%) of the sample said that it was difficult to find suitable

places to meet friends. These young people were more likely to be at the younger end

of the age range and to be female.

Young people who had difficulty in finding meeting places by young people's age group (chi-squared test)			
13-15 yrs. %	16-17 yrs. %	18-19 yrs. %	Significance Level
45	52	30	.0256

Young people who had difficulty finding meeting places by young people's gender (chi-squared test)		
Male %	Female %	Significance Level
35	51	.0224

The young people who said they experienced difficulty in finding suitable places were asked what kind of place they thought would be suitable for the purpose.

Their comments are reported here as the sum of findings, grouped together only when data collection had been completed. Some young people gave a type of place.

> *youth club/community centre;*
> *shed/warehouse/converted loft/big house;*
> *cafe/coffee bar/diner/snack bar;*
> *snooker/pool/music & video/ sports club/centre, skate park;*
> *pub/youth bar;*
> *disco/nightclub/social club;*
> *park;*
> *bus station.*

Some of the same young people and others gave qualitative features to the places they thought would be suitable.

> _physical features_ - indoors, warm, with places to sit, not too big, where no damage can be done;
>
> _location_ - nearby, close to home, secluded;
>
> _the character of the establishment_ - relaxed atmosphere, welcoming, social, not too noisy, alcohol-free, away from the police, away from drugs, where you don't have to be quiet and stop smoking, where the drinks are free, no restrictions;
>
> _'curriculum'_ - somewhere where you can talk to friends, do what you want, where there is life, something happening, (live) music, dancing, things to get involved in, (lots of) things to do, organised activities, games;
>
> _age of participants_ - 16 to 18 year olds, 16 years plus, people the same age, teenagers, 14 to 18 year olds, no-one over 18, older young people;
>
> _other characteristics of participants_ - just for close friends, lots of people, for Asian young people, just for lads, lasses only, no yobbos;
>
> _opening hours_ - till 10 or 10.30pm, till late, 24 hours a day, at least once a week, more than once a week, more often, every night;
>
> _the involvement of adults_ - no parents, a young adult in charge, no supervision.

These remarks are recorded in the words of at least one of the young people who made them. Some remarks were made by several young people; others are unique.

A further two or three young people said that no one place would be suitable, but that they sought variety.

Slightly fewer young people in the Wakefield cohort said they had difficulty finding places to meet friends than did the Norfolk young people, 42% by contrast with 50%. Like Norfolk, these tended to be the younger of the young people in the

sample. The qualitative remarks of the Wakefield young people who said they had difficulty finding places to meet friends, about the sort of places which would be suitable, were strikingly similar to those made two years earlier by their opposite numbers in Norfolk.

The same sorts of places were mentioned by those who said they had no difficulty in finding places to meet friends in both areas but the proportion of young people mentioning one rather than another are rather different.

Comparison of young people's meeting places (chi-squared test)			
	Wakefield %	Norfolk %	Significance Level
Youth clubs	25	4	.001
Pub, nightclub, social club	27	57	.001
One another's homes	54	36	.01
Streets and similar public places	25	20	

The pub was a much less common meeting place in Wakefield than in Norfolk but those meeting there, like those in Norfolk, tended to be older and working. The Wakefield sample was younger and fewer of those old enough were working. The popularity of youth clubs in Wakefield is probably a consequence of the over-representation of young people involved in youth provision in the sample as a whole. It is interesting to note the similarity, against the backdrop of other differences, of the proportion of young people saying that they were meeting their friends on the streets and, since these were the young people who said they had no difficulty in finding places to meet their friends, were presumably content to continue to meet there. Perhaps this is the proportion of young people retaining independence and disinterest in joining and participating.

<u>Activities</u>

A third of the young people in the sample, more young men than young women, said there were activities they would like to undertake.

Young people wanting to undertake activities by gender (chi-squared test)		
Male %	Female %	Significance Level
40	24	.0128

Seventy nine young people gave 44 different activities!

Abseiling	*Live music*
Athletics	*Motor-cross*
Banger racing	*Motor racing*
Basketball	*Netball*
Bungee jumping	*Outdoor pursuits*
Camping	*Paint balling*
Canoeing	*Parachuting*
Cinema	*Rock-climbing*
Cross-stitch embroidery	*Roller-skating*
Cycling	*Rugby*
Deep sea diving	*Scrambling*
Discos	*Skateboarding*
Discussions	*Ski-ing*
Fitness club	*Sky-diving*
Football	*Sport*
Go-kart racing	*Snooker*
Golf	*Squash*
Hang gliding	*Swimming*
Hockey	*Tennis*
Ice skating	*Ten pin bowling*
Jet ski-ing	*Windsurfing*
Karate	*Youth club*

Some of these activities project a sense of pipe dreams or of the type of experience each person would like to have just once in their lives. Others are

remarkably humble. Like the Norfolk material, some are very specific, for example go-kart racing and motor-cross, as opposed to a more general category of activity which, in these cases, might be motor-sport. Some of the activities listed are more general in nature, for example sport and outdoor pursuits.

While there was little agreement amongst young people with regard to the things they would like to do, there was almost overwhelming agreement on the reasons they cannot do them. For half of the young people, the main reason is that they believe there are no facilities which are sufficiently local and for a further quarter of them, the reason is that they believe the cost to be too great. The remainder gave a variety of reasons including their exclusion on grounds of age or of gender, insufficient information, not knowing how to go about it and not knowing enough other young people who would also be interested.

The reasons of the young women tended to be more diverse than those of the young men.

The figure of 33% of the Wakefield cohort who wanted to pursue an activity of some sort compares with 44% of the Norfolk cohort. The ratio of young people to activities wanted is almost identical, 1:0.6. The groups gave a similar variety of reasons for not being able to pursue their chosen activities, the most frequent reason in both groups being the perception of no local facilities.

Young People's Preoccupations

The young people were asked to think about a friend, about the same age as themselves, and to say what they thought were their friends' worries or what was on their minds. Ten percent of the sample was unwilling or unable to answer the question. Those who answered gave concerns very typical of the life stage of young people in the age group: boy/girl relationships, academic work, image or appearance, employment and its prospects. More surprisingly, a significant number of young people were worried about their individual or family financial situation; for some this

concern related to debt, for others to "making ends meet". Furthermore young people were concerned about not only their relationships with their parents but about the relationship between their parents.

Young people's preoccupations	
	Young People %
Boy/girl relationships	20
Lack of money or debt	18
School/college work/exams.	14
Relationships with/between parents	12
Image/appearance	11
(Future) career/job	10

Differences between sub-groups in the sample lie with age and with current occupation. Concerns about boy/girl relationships, about parents, and academic work significantly decline with age as does, rather less, concern with image or appearance. Concern about jobs and money or debt significantly increase through the age range.

Young people's preoccupations by their age			
	13-15yrs. %	16-17yrs. %	18-19yrs. %
Boy/girl relationships	27	15	16
School/college work/exams.	18	15	9
Parents	20	8	6
Image/appearance	12	10	9
Lack of money or debt	2	25	31
(Future) career/job	2	12	19

The relationship between preoccupations and occupation is clearly linked to that of preoccupations and age but there is a difference in that only 2% of the young people

who were unemployed or on training schemes expressed concern about relationships by comparison with 16% of young people in the same age group, in the sample as a whole. Forty five percent expressed concern relating to lack of money or debt by a parallel comparison with 31%.

Comparison of preoccupations	Wakefield %	Norfolk %
Boy/girl relationships	D 20	D 28
Money, lack of money, debt	I 18	I 7
School/college work/exams.	D 14	D 10
Home and parents	D 12	6
Image/appearance	D 11	9
(Future) career/job	I 10	I 11
Popularity with peers		6

N.B. D indicates that the concern declines with age and I that it increases with age within the range.

Between Norfolk and Wakefield and between 1990 and 1992, concern about money had moved from being the major preoccupation of just 7% to being the main concern of 18%. Boy/girl relationships was the most common concern with both groups but it was rather less of a concern with the Wakefield group. The Wakefield group give a sense of being more concerned about a range of issues whereas the Norfolk group appears relatively unconcerned except about boy/girl relationships.

Dealing with Issues and Anxieties

A further question broached the subject of the ways in which the young people were dealing with their concerns. Slightly more young people, 15% of the total sample, were unable to answer this question. Some young people gave more than one response. Talking to other young people about worries and preoccupations comes top of the list with over half giving this as at least one of their reactions.

One respondent said, ·

> *Well she talks to me and her other friends about it and we*
> *try to help, but how can anyone help with a problem like*
> *that!*

A quarter said their friends were taking direct and independent action of some sort, for example working harder, borrowing money, looking for a job. Ten percent were talking to one or both parents about their concerns. Smaller numbers of young people were avoiding their concerns, for example drinking to forget, not thinking about it. Others were demonstrating their distress, for example by crying or by complaining.

Young people's responses to concerns	Young People %
Talking to peers	52
Taking direct action	23
Talking to parent(s)	10
Avoiding the issue	6
Demonstrating distress	6

The difference in the sub-groups here relates to gender in that the young men were more likely to take some form of independent and direct action or to practice avoidance, whereas the young women were more likely to communicate their concerns to their peers.

Responses to concerns by gender	Young Men %	Young Women %
Talking to peers	40	60
Taking direct action	27	16
Talking to parents	·5	5
Avoiding the issue	9	1
Demonstrating distress	6	5

Occupation once again seems significant. The young people who were at work were only fractionally older than those on schemes or who were unemployed yet their reactions seem markedly more assured and independent. The option of taking direct action seems to have been a much slimmer one for the unemployed, particularly if the concern was shortage of cash. They were less likely to talk to friends, perhaps they were less likely to have access to people to talk to, and more likely to have demonstrated distress.

Young people's responses by their occupations			
	FTE	Unemp./ schemes	Work
	%	%	%
Talking to peers	54	39	47
Taking direct action	19	20	41
Talking to parents	6	5	0
Avoiding the issue	4	7	6
Demonstrating distress	4	12	3

The response to the question in Wakefield is much more comprehensive than it was in Norfolk, because the question about the ways in which young people were dealing with issues was asked separately rather than as part of the question asking what the anxieties or preoccupations were. Many more young people answered the question and the smaller number of answers in the Norfolk study guided the coding of the Wakefield one. The larger number of responses facilitated investigations into differences between sub-groups of the sample.

Informal Learning Experiences

Flanagan's (1951) critical incidents were once again used to explore the area of young people's informal learning experiences. The young people were asked to recall a memorable incident which had taken place outside school or college. A choice of

starter phrases, chosen to reflect youth work ambitions and which themselves are the potential outcomes of social education, were offered. A few young people were unable to answer the question but around 85% of the sample gave answers which it was possible to include in the analysis. The young people selected their starter phrases as follows.

Starter phrases selected	Young People %
I made new friends	33
I made a decision	17
I took responsibility for something	14
I faced a challenge	12
I felt I'd really achieved something	9
Someone helped me to do something for myself	6
I solved a problem	5
I felt valued	2

Prompting questions - 'How did it come about?' 'Who else was involved?'- were used to elicit the young person's perspective on what had been learned or achieved and the process which had facilitated his/her social learning. The young people were asked specifically whether they felt they had learned anything about themselves, about others or about relationships.

Young people indicated, in addition to those recorded by the use of particular starter phrases, a variety of learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes		
Outcomes:	Examples:	%
Attitudes or beliefs	*People can't be trusted; Parents try to help; Hard work is rewarded*	55
Self-awareness	*I found out what I can do*	52
Social skills	*Confidence; Communication skills*	39
Awareness of others	*How another person sees things*	31
Understanding of relationships	*Dishonesty is hurtful*	27
Practical knowledge	*How a tyre is replaced*	10
Practical skills	*How to replace a tyre*	7
Political skill	*Negotiating; Organising*	5
Factual knowledge	*How model aeroplanes fly*	2

About a quarter of the young people who shared their experiences recorded the learning outcome only in terms of the initial starter phrase. Others mentioned up to six, mostly two or three, different outcomes of the nine identified outcomes listed above, in addition to the starter phrase they chose.

It was also possible to build, using axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) several different aspects of the informal learning process. Not all of the young people mentioned each of the aspects studied, thus the numbers on which the percentages are based differ for each characteristic. First of all, an analysis of the type of situation was attempted, using three different groups of characteristic. The incident was almost always unusual or new to the particular young person, but it may not have been an extraordinary experience for young people in general. The experience was more often planned than spontaneous or unexpected. It more often than not took place in a familiar rather than unfamiliar setting. It seems likely that if the incident itself was commonplace to the particular young person that it was either unexpected or it took place in an unfamiliar environment or possibly both.

Types of learning situation				
No. of Young People	Characteristics of their Learning Situations			
		%		%
114	Planned	60	Spontaneous or unexpected	40
161	New or unusual	84	Usual	16
169	Familiar setting	64	Unfamiliar setting	36

The learning process had often revealed a demonstration of young people's existing knowledge or skills.

Types of skill demonstrated	
	Young People %
Social skills	56
Practical skills	23
Knowledge or familiarity	18
Political skills	12

In this respect young people were not the objects of others' teaching but utilised that which they already had with more social or personal learning as one of the products.

The young people also gave information about the actors in the scenes they described. It is interesting to note how many of the incidents were initiated by self and in which no-one else participated. Adults, especially those outside the family were reasonably often the initiators of learning incidents but were much less often accomplices. Other young people, most often in the guise of friends and less often acquaintances, were more often accomplices than initiators.

The roles of young people

Incidents Initiated by: (125 Respondents) %		Supported by: (197 Respondents) %	
Self	37	Friend	27
Non-family adult(s)	20	Other young people	25
Friend	19	No-one	15
Family adult(s)	12	Combination of adults & y.p.	13
Other young people	5	Family adult(s)	8
Combination of adults & y.p.	4	Non-family adult(s)	6
Boy/girlfriend	3	Boy/girlfriend	6

Most interesting, however, is the role assumed by the young people themselves. In an overwhelming 88% of the 173 young people who mentioned it, the young people were the leading actors. In a further 11% of cases, they played supporting roles, that is, the incident or event could not have occurred without them nor could an understudy have easily stepped into their shoes. In only one case, did the young person whose story was told, play a peripheral role. Either the young people told their stories in such a way that their own role was seen as important - the starter phrases encouraged this - or only the scenes in which their roles were important were memorable or they experienced informal learning most often when the scene depended upon their participation. The latter suggestion reinforces long-standing ideas about participatory youth work, as detailed in my literature review.

There are several ways in which the coding of the Wakefield data was informed by the experience of coding the Norfolk data. This limits the direct comparability of the material around informal learning experiences. For example, in Norfolk I had failed to recognise that the starter phrases were themselves the outcomes of the learning situations and so I did not request that interviewers record the starter phrases selected. I corrected this omission in Wakefield but, in respect of this conceptual field, it leaves me with nothing with which to compare the Wakefield data. I became dissatisfied with

some of the categories I had used to code other variables. I collapsed some and further broke down others to better exploit the material. Despite this, I think it is possible to see from the following comparison that the types of activities and events were similar sorts of experience.

Comparison of learning outcomes			
	Wakefield %	Norfolk %	
Attitudes and beliefs	55	16	Attitudes and beliefs
		14	Life
Self-awareness	52	36	Self
Social skills	39	28	Confidence
		16	Responsibility
		14	Maturity
		12	Independence
Awareness of others	31	23	Awareness of others
Understanding relationships	27	26	Relationships
Practical knowledge	10	15	Knowledge/skills
Practical skills	7		
Political skill	5		
Factual knowledge	2		

Wherever the item is broken down, the higher the cumulative score of the composite parts because young people often scored in more than one of the parts.

In respect of the type of situations in which young people learned informally, the Wakefield analysis built on the Norfolk one. The Norfolk study revealed that the incident was very often usual or concerned with the life stage. The Wakefield study did nothing to contradict this but investigated whether the situations were planned or spontaneous, unusual or usual to the individual and whether it took place in a familiar or unfamiliar setting. The Wakefield study thus found that although the situations

themselves may not be unusual for young people in the age group, they were often

new or unusual to the individual concerned.

Both studies looked at use of young people's existing skills, but the Norfolk

analysis includes in the category the acquisition of new skills

Comparison of use of existing skills		
	Wakefield - use %	Norfolk - use and acquisition %
Social skills	56	28
Practical skills	23)	41
Knowledge or familiarity	18)	
Political skills	12	32

This presents a picture of young people with social skills to use and with political skills

to learn.

The Wakefield study supported the findings of the Norfolk study in respect of

the importance of the key role played by the young person him/herself in his/her own

learning situation. Furthermore there are striking similarities between the companions

of the Wakefield and the Norfolk cohorts.

Companions in the learning situations		
	Wakefield %	Norfolk %
Friend	27	30
Other young people	25	22
No-one	15	18
Family adult(s)	8	9
Boy/girlfriend	6	12

The Youth Work Relationship

Just over half (55%) of the young people in the sample, a smaller proportion of Asian young people than the rest, said they knew an adult outside the family who they felt understood them better than the rest.

Just over half (54%) of the adults were female and just under half were male. Same gender adults were chosen in significant proportions by both young men and by young women, exclusively by the Asian young people, and this was especially true for young women and for the under 18s of both genders.

Adults' gender by young people's gender			
	Young people		Significance
	Male	Female	
	%	%	
Adults			
Male	64	25	
Female	36	75	.0000

The mean age of the adults, as perceived by the young people, was 31 years. There was much variety in the answers given here but half of the adults were aged between 25 and 35 and only 10% were over 40. The younger the teenager, the younger the adult; the average age of adults described by 13 and 14 year olds was 28; that of those described by 18 and 19 year olds, 32. The adults in general were about 15 years older than the young people themselves and probably around ten years younger than the young people's parents.

<The young people were asked to give the role of "their adults", choosing from the list overleaf. Around 37% of the young people gave two or more adjacent roles for their adults.

Multiple and single roles of the acceptable adults		
	Young People Whose Adult was Known in	
	Multiple Roles	a Single Role
(No. of Respondents	45	78)
	%	%
Role of adults		
Friend of the family	41	26
Friend/relative of friend	31	23
Neighbour	30	10
Teacher, social worker, youth worker	19	18
Someone at work	12	8
Other	16	15

For a significant number of young people, this relationship was richly embedded in a network of family, friends, community and even work. Comparatively few of the adults described were professionals, and some of these were known in other capacities as well. The professionals and the work colleagues were perceived as being slightly older, mid rather than early thirties, than the adults in other roles.

The young people were asked how long they had known "their adults" and the length of time given varied from less than a year to 'all of my life' but the average length of time was almost six years.

Relationships in the immediate community were rather longer on average while those with professionals and work colleagues, some of whom were probably Youth Training (YT) supervisors, were about half this length. The relationship with the professional was thus less common, perhaps the one to which most young people had less access, but was established in a comparatively short period of time.

Same gender relationships were more enduring.

The young people were also asked how much time they spent with "their adults" and in exceptional cases time spent together was very limited - in one case

communication was by letter. The response was aligned, as far as was possible, with youth work sessions of a morning, an afternoon or an evening, and the mean was over four sessions per week. The figures suggest that this figure is marginally lower for those at the younger end of the sample, just over 3 sessions per week, and higher for those at its older end. This, in turn, is probably related to the role of the adult; for a high proportion of the older young people, the role of the adult was that of work colleague, or YT supervisor and it is in the nature of the role that a good deal of time, perhaps ten sessions per week are spent together.

The young people were asked to score their adult-young person relationship in a 5-point scale from 'never' to 'always' against 15 statements reflecting notions of friendship. The statements are listed here, ranked according to the frequency with which young people scored their relationships with 'their adults' positively, in other words, more often than not.

Mean rank of friendship statements		
	%	Mean
S/he accepts me as I am	90	4.71
I can be myself with him/her	93	4.65
S/he helps in times of trouble	82	4.43
I like to be there for him/her	70	4.39
S/he treats me as an equal	84	4.25
S/he stands up for me if necessary	73	4.24
I enjoy his/her company	86	4.20
I trust him/her to act in my best interests	76	4.17
S/he is there for me	70	4.04
S/he values me	57	3.96
S/he helps me to find out the things I need to know	68	3.83
I understand why s/he does things	50	3.21
We think the same	39	3.00
S/he introduces me to new interests	27	2.71

The older the adult, the lower the relationship scored. Relationships in which the adult was female scored higher than if the adult was male. The more sessions spent together (perhaps the better the partners knew one another), the lower the rating. Relationships in which the adult was a professional scored comparatively low.

The analysis further sought the underlying dimensions to the young person-adult relationship. There are a number of possible alternatives, but the one that makes most sense allows for three dimensions:

acceptance - treats me as an equal, accepts me as I am, trusts me to make my own decisions, I can be myself with him/her;

similarity - I understand him/her, we think the same, introduces me to new interests, enjoy his/her company;

support - there for me, there for him/her, stands up for me, helps in times of trouble.

This solution is only partly satisfactory in that it leaves some of the statements unaccounted for.

Relationships in which the adult was female scored higher on the acceptance scale. The older the adult, the lower the score on the similarity scale.

The acceptance and support sub-groupings are scored generally higher by young people. Young women especially scored acceptance and support more highly than similarity. This does not tell us whether the notion of similarity is less important to young people in this context or whether it is harder to come by.>

Sight should not be lost those young people, almost half of the sample, who said they did not know any adults who they thought understood them.

This aspect of the Wakefield study was clearly a marked extension of the Norfolk one, much of the extension being informed by the qualitative material obtained in Norfolk.

Where the studies are comparable, the findings are similar. Fifty five percent of young people in Wakefield, compared with 71% of young people in Norfolk, felt they knew an adult who understood them. Same gender adults were preferred by young people in both localities. The mean age of the adults in Wakefield was 30.8 years, compared with 33.8 years in Norfolk. Since the age of the adult in Wakefield rose with the age of the young people, the younger sample in Wakefield may provide part, but only part, of the explanation for this relatively small difference.

Comparison of adult roles in relation to young people		
	Wakefield %	Norfolk %
Friend of the family	31	31
Friend/relative of a friend	26	29
Professional	19	29
Neighbour	18	23
Someone at work	9	14

Like Norfolk, it was common for the adult to be known in a variety of roles in Wakefield but the figures show that this feature was more common in Norfolk.

Involvement in Youth Organisations

Almost three quarters of the young people in the sample (175 young people) said they had, at least at one time, been involved in a youth organisation of one sort or another, though the Asian young people were less likely to have been involved than the rest. A third of the sample had experience of more than one type of youth organisation. The mean age at which they had joined (the first of these) was 11 and a half though the range was from six to 18 years.

Of greatest popular initial appeal or possibly availability were youth clubs with 36% and sports clubs with 29% of the population being involved at some point in their lives. Uniformed organisations with 14% and social clubs, which young people cannot

usually join until their mid to late teens, with 11%, were popular or available to a

lesser degree. School extra-curricular activities, voluntary work opportunities and

hobby clubs/societies had attracted comparatively few young people. The story in

respect of school extra-curricular activities might have been a very different one before

the educational reforms of recent years. This is an idea supported by the contrast

between the Wakefield and Norfolk figures; only seven percent of young people in

Wakefield had been involved in school extra-curricular activities, by comparison with

19% in Norfolk, two years earlier.

Types of organisation in which young people had been involved
at some point in their lives

Types of organisation	No. of young people	As % of population	As % of the involved
Youth clubs*	87	36	50
Sports clubs	71	29	41
Uniformed orgs.	34	14	19
Social clubs	26	11	15
School ex-curric.	17	7	10
Voluntary work	13	5	7
Hobby clubs	11	5	6

* Since young people involved in youth clubs were over-represented in the
sample, all of the 'youth club' figures given here have been adjusted, using the
known involvement figure of 15% for current involvement in statutory Youth
Service provision in Wakefield. The figure has been manipulated
proportionately to give the percentage of those ever involved.

Involvement in youth organisations as a percentage of the population
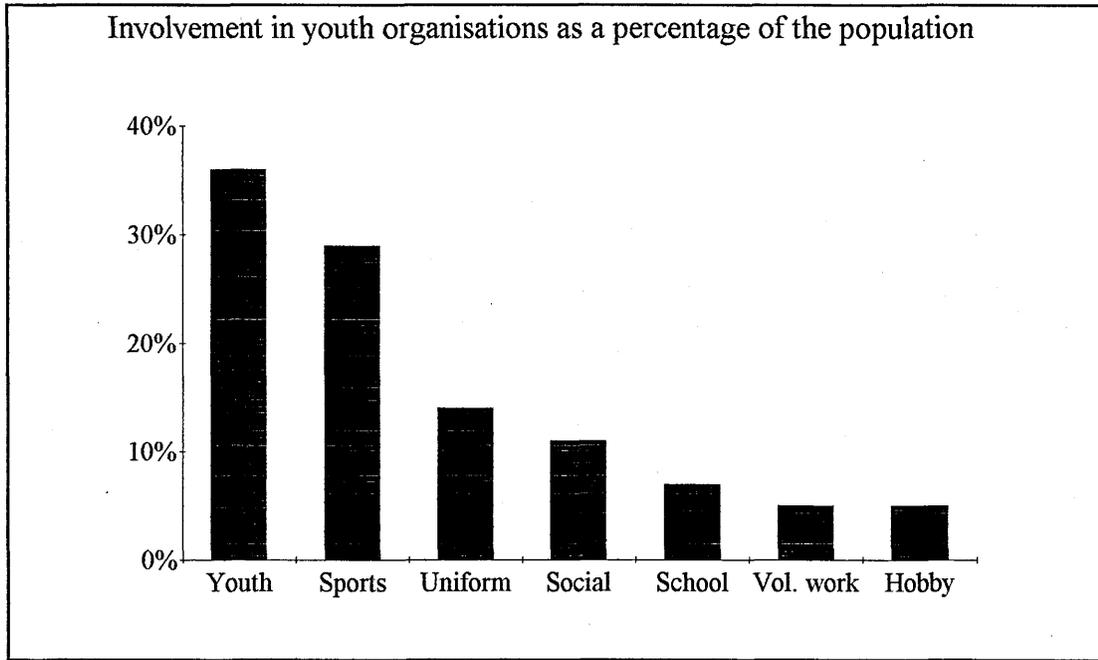
There are some differences between sub-groups in the types of organisation in which young people had been involved. Youth clubs had attracted mainly those in the under 16 age group. Sports clubs had attracted more of those in the 18 plus age group than the rest and marginally more young men than young women. Social clubs had attracted more of those aged 16 plus, especially those aged 18 and over. Young people in villages were more likely to have participated in school sports and social clubs. Those in towns were more likely to have been members of youth clubs.

Almost three quarters of the young people who had ever been involved were still involved at the time of their interview (126 young people). These young people were likely to be younger rather than older; furthermore the figures suggest that involvement is high for those of school age, that it drops significantly for those in the first couple of years after school leaving and then rises again, though not to its former height. These young people were marginally more likely to be male than female. They were most likely to be in full-time education, then in work and least likely to be those young people who were unemployed or on schemes; this is clearly related also to the age of the young people.

Social clubs had retained by far the greatest proportion (92%) of their membership in the Youth Service priority age range. Sports and hobby clubs, school extra-curricular activities and voluntary work opportunities each retained around half of their membership, the latter illustrating a small but committed involvement. Youth clubs and uniformed organisations retained less than a third of their memberships in the 13 - 19 age range, the latter attracting only half of the former to begin with. Young people living in the city were less likely to retain their membership, whatever the type of organisation.

The types of organisation in which young people were still involved at the time of the survey

Types of Organisation	No. of Young People	As % Population	As % of those Ever Involved in this Org.
Youth clubs*	36	15	28
Sports clubs	40	17	56
Uniformed orgs.	11	5	32
Social clubs	24	10	92
School ex-curric.	9	4	53
Voluntary work	8	3	61
Hobby clubs	5	2	45

Current involvement of young people as a percentage of the population

Retention of membership
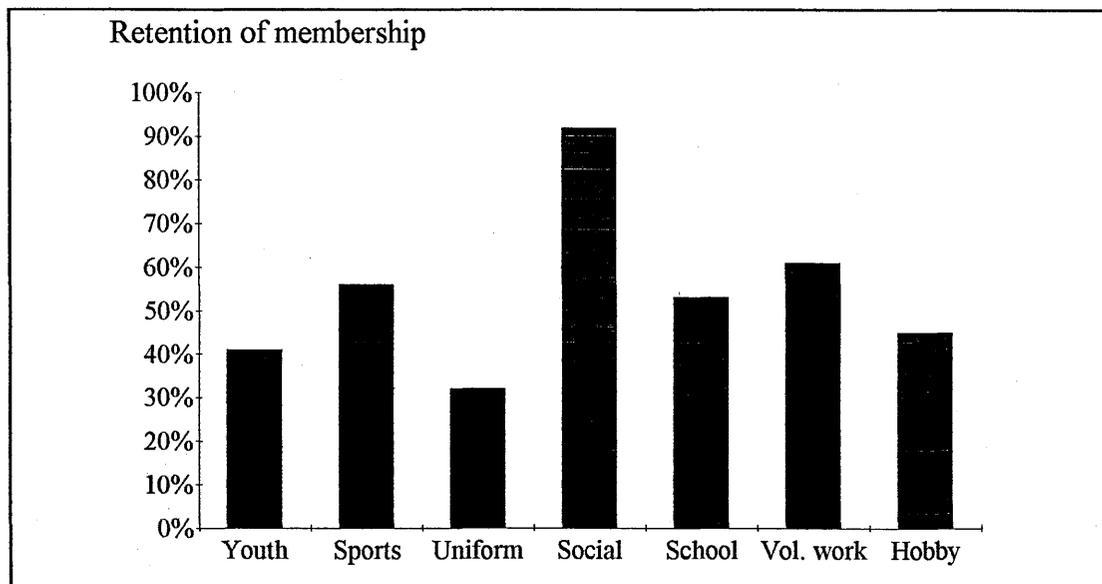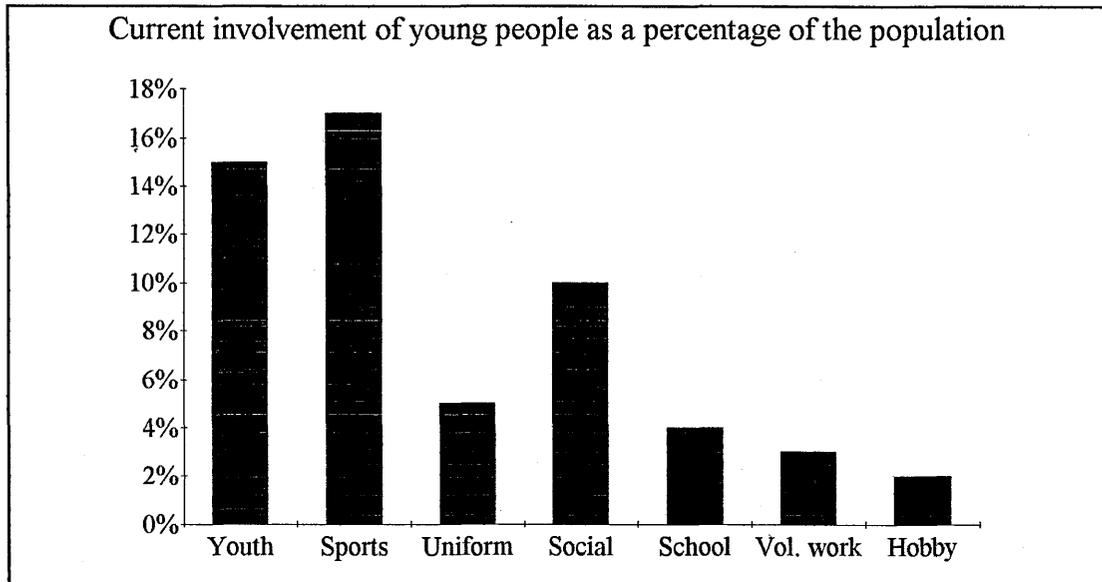
The average age of those who had once been involved but who had left by the time of the interview was 14 and a half, some having left as young as 11. Some of these young people gave their reasons for leaving as follows:

became too old or older than other participants;
too much school/college homework;
provision conflicted with other preferred
activities;
developed boy/girlfriend relationships;
poor relationship with club/group leader/worker;
provision closed down;
provision too expensive;
provision boring.

Just over a quarter of the young people (66 young people) said they had never been involved in any club or group especially for young people. Some of these had still to join.

Seventy three percent in Wakefield and 72% in Norfolk said they had ever been members of youth organisations. Those who have never joined, and seem unlikely to, number around 20% in both areas.

There are some differences in the types of organisations in which young people had been involved.

Comparison of types of organisation in which young people had been involved		
	Wakefield %	Norfolk %
Youth clubs	36*	66
Sports clubs	29	36
Uniformed organisations	14	38
Social clubs	11	8
School extra-curricular activity	7	19
Voluntary work	5	6
Hobby clubs	5	15

There are many differences here and there are straightforward explanations for only some of them. The large number of young people who said they had been involved in youth clubs in Norfolk suggests that, as suspected, the sample included an over-representation of these young people. Many more young people said they had been involved in the uniformed organisations in Norfolk. There is a sharp drop in school extra-curricular involvement, probably more strongly related to the changes in the funding and organisation of statutory education, between 1990 and 1992, than to differences between Norfolk and Wakefield. There was a much greater involvement in hobby clubs in Norfolk than in Wakefield.

Why young people worry is revealed

DEBT and relationships between parents are two of the problems which worry young people in the Wakefield district, a report reveals.

The survey, carried out by Wakefield Youth Service, also found that many young people would like to take up hobbies but are either unaware of local facilities or worried about the cost. Nearly half said they had difficulty finding places to meet friends.

Members of the council's education committee were told the survey was designed and carried out by 37 young people who were given special training in interview techniques. They also helped interpret the results.

The survey was completed by 241 youngsters from all parts of the district who were carefully selected to give a balance of race, age and gender.

It showed three-quarters of youngsters in the Wakefield district have been involved with a youth organisation of some kind.

The average age for joining youth clubs is 11 and a half and they are most popular with school children.

Membership tails-off at an average age of 14 and a half as youngsters begin to think about exams. Many said they left clubs because they were older than the other members.

Young people, particularly girls, aged between 13 and 16 who live in Wakefield and in surrounding villages said they had a problem finding places to meet friends.

Most in that age range met at each other's houses, whereas older people chose pubs, nightclubs or social clubs.

Many say that ideally they would like indoor venues close to home which provide a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere without too much supervision.

One thing youngsters do not agree on is the type of activities they would like to take part in — 79 people gave 44 different answers.

Most were sporting activities but some youngsters would like to take-up cross-stitch embroidery or join a debating society.

But when it came to reasons why they could not participate in their chosen activity, half said they did not believe there were any local facilities and a further quarter thought the cost was too great.

People interviewed were asked to think of a friend their age and to say what they thought their friend's worries were.

Relationships with the opposite sex came top of the list but, surprisingly, debt or lack of money came a close second beating school work and exams and image.

Surveyors were also surprised that many people — particularly those aged between 13 and 15 — listed relationships between parents as a source of worry.

Concerns change with age, 16 to 19-year-olds worried far less about boyfriends, girlfriends and appearance and far more about money and jobs.

When it comes to dealing with concerns, men seemed far more likely to take direct action or try to avoid the problem, while women talked to friends.

Occupation also played a big role — those in work, who were only slightly older than those who were in further education or unemployed, seemed much more assured and independent.

Most said they would talk to friends or take direct action — one sign of their independence was that none of them said they would talk to parents about a problem.

Just over half the youngsters in the sample said they knew an adult outside the family who, they felt, understood them. In most cases these were friends of the family or a friend or a relative of a friend.

Generally these adults were 15 years older than the youngster and about ten years younger than the young person's parents.

Surveyors reported that Asian young people were less likely to be involved in youth organisations and more likely to have difficulty in finding places to meet friends.

Geography also played a part in the survey's findings. Youngsters living in villages were more likely to have been involved in school, sports and social clubs and were most likely to meet friends in a pub.

People living in towns were most likely to have been a member of a youth club and found it easier than those living in villages or the city to meet friends.

Youngsters living in the city were least likely to retain their involvement with youth groups and said they had difficulty meeting friends.

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TAILOR MADE FOR YOUTHS

By BRENDA HAYWOOD

A MAJOR shake-up of Wakefield District Youth Service is being planned — with guidance from the teenagers who use it.

The findings of a survey conducted by young people among a sample of 13 to 19-year-olds on what they wanted and needed for a local youth service is now being used in a re-vamp to make the service more "people-orientated."

The revision comes in the face of the service having to face cuts of £50,000 this year as part of Wakefield Council's overall cost-cutting package of £14m.

Most of the money has been saved through three district youth officers and three full-time youth workers opting for voluntary early retirement, but there remained an urgent need to look at how the service was managed and delivered, said principal youth officer Lister Baynes.

FINDINGS

He has put forward detailed plans for a new-look service, which he hopes will be in place by next April and which takes on board at least some of the findings of the young people's survey.

The survey showed that teenagers' needs for a meeting place were unsophisticated, calling for a combination of freedom and security, that they wanted a wide range of activities and that many youngsters were unaware of what was currently on offer from the Youth Service.

Mr Baynes said the findings of the surveys were being used to guide the service in drawing up its plans for the future.

"We want to devolve responsibility nearer to the activity, not keep it remote, and we are striving to be creative in the face of cuts, making sure that the youngsters using the service are the ones who suffered least," he said.

"Decision-making must come down from the top to closer to the people using the service so we are developing a team approach."

The new structure sets up six area youth work teams and one district-wide team, with high school catchment areas determining the boundaries of the area teams.