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A baseline and evaluation of LVSC's Children and Young People's Project (year one)

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Background to the CYP Project

In 2009, London Councils commissioned London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC), under specification 100, to provide sector specific second-tier services to frontline children's services (the CYP Project). The CYP Project runs for four years from April 2009 to March 2013.

Second-tier support is provided to 17 organisations working with vulnerable children and young people across four London Councils priority service areas: -

- (19) Improve educational attainment;
- (30) Reduce bullying and its impact;
- (68) Reduce involvement in violent crime – with an emphasis on the prevention of involvement in gang culture, knife and gun crime; and
- (71) Offer a free confidential helpline for children and young people.

The CYP Project is delivered through the Policy and Networks Team, at LVSC, and staffed by one full-time Organisational Support Officer, with pro rata support of an Information and Events Officer (2 days) and a Policy and Networks Manager (0.5 days). The support services it provides are: events and training; networking opportunities; one-to-one consultancy; information; and resources. It has an infrastructure role in linking local and regional activity around the children and young people's sector.

When planning support for the frontline organisations it was commissioning, London Councils consulted organisations — in line with the key recommendations of “Building Blocks” (Harker and Burkeman, 2007) — in moving towards putting “purchaser power” in the hands of frontline organisations. London Councils' decisions about the way it would provide support, through second-tier organisations, came out of that consultation.

There are eight outcomes in the funding agreement between London Councils and LVSC, which were set by London Councils. The associated outputs and indicators were set by LVSC. The outputs detail the activity of support. There are 18 indicators in which LVSC has set out its targets for delivery — 15 of these indicators apply directly to Year 1 activity (the additional three indicators set targets for Year 2).

Evaluation: methods, tools and techniques

Research for the evaluation took place between February and April 2010 and was carried out by Corinne Welsh, working through a small independent consultancy company that LVSC commissioned.

We had an initial face-to-face meeting with LVSC's Children and Young People's Organisational Support Officer, Marie-Anne Diedhiou Roy, to understand the CYP Project and to establish our aims. This was followed by telephone conversations with: the CYP Project's London Councils Grants Officer, John Bray (who is also the grants officer for

eight of the organisations supported by the service); LVSC Policy and Networks Manager, Gethyn Williams; and LVSC Policy and Networks Development Officer, Tim Brogden. Towards the end of the research period we also had a telephone conversation with London Action Trust Interim CSAS Manager, Fiona Reddick.

This range of telephone discussions gave the perspectives of the service commissioner; wider policy context of the work; the equalities agenda; deeper understanding of London Councils' programme; and coordination of second-tier services. It also informed the content and structure for telephone interviews with the 17 supported organisations.

We created a template for structured 30-minute interviews with each of the 17 supported organisations (see *Appendix 2 — Telephone interview questions*) and interviews were arranged by the CYP Project team. Interviewees held a range of roles, within their organisations, in relation to their London Councils funded service.

We had planned for these interviews to all be by telephone, over a two-week period, with one representative from each organisation. Owing to staff availability and a need to ensure the voice of each organisation was heard, we did divert from this plan. One organisation was interviewed face-to-face following an event, within the time-frame, two organisations were interviewed outside the time-frame, and in one case more than one member of staff was involved. It is worth noting that this was a divergence because a number of organisations offered us the opportunity to interview more than one member of staff, which we had to resist for timing reasons.

The evaluator attended two CYP Project events held during the evaluation period: “Your London Councils Funding Unravelling” on 17 March and the “End of Year Get Together” on 30 March. These provided opportunities to talk to organisations face-to-face, to get a first-hand understanding of the project's activities, and to appreciate the current issues.

We carried out a desktop review of feedback from events; website, e-newsletter and e-forum statistics and content; tool-kits used for one-to-one support; records of support and tracking; two case studies the CYP Project had commissioned from supported organisations; the CYP Project's first monitoring report; and publications. A full list of all the resources used is at *Appendix 3 — Resources*.

Setting a baseline for the CYP Project at the end of Year 1

The funding agreement between LVSC and London Councils makes the provision that a baseline would be established, for each of the indicators, during Year 1 of the CYP Project. We have been relatively creative in how we have measured the first year's progress, using a combination of direct questions that relate to a particular indicator and an analysis of other responses that demonstrate progress. For each outcome we have described the process used to measure against the target. We have been careful not to count organisations more than once when we have calculated a figure from a range of sources.

There are some difficulties in the way the indicators are expressed. Most are set out in percentage terms, which tend to become meaningless when 100% is just 17 organisations. Whilst these percentages are translated into integers for the average over four years, the annual targets are not expressed as integers. We found it helpful, as a starting point, to translate all the first year indicators into integers and we have reported on them in this way.

When we spoke with London Councils they were clear that the intention of support was as a “resource rather than obligation” for frontline organisations. The organisations supported span size, geographical reach, and experience. As such, the journeys they travel over the four years, their successes, and the impact of LVSC's support will look quite different for each organisation.

The overarching questions, which were asked by both LVSC and London Councils in our discussions, are those of what works in terms of second-tier support, where it has been effective, and what makes good quality second-tier support. There is a sense in which the organisations have been offered a menu of support and a desire to know which elements have been most valued by organisations, to inform provision in subsequent years. The CYP Project team was interested in finding out more about where meeting one outcome contributes towards meeting another. We have tried to address these areas in our report.

Key findings emerging from Year 1

Two strong themes for the first year of the CYP Project were equalities and safeguarding. These were both areas that were highlighted in our initial discussions with the CYP Project team. The first year of the CYP Project coincided with the introduction of new legislation and systems around vetting and barring, with particular impact for organisations working with children and young people. As part of their funding requirement London Councils provided mandatory training for organisations on both safeguarding and equalities.

At the start of the year, the CYP Project focused on providing resources about safeguarding. These included offering organisations the opportunity to work towards a recognised quality mark, the cost of which is covered by the support provision. In the latter part of the year, the CYP Project has been responding to London Councils' concerns about the quality of equalities monitoring by funded organisations.

The CYP Project has made good links with London Action Trust around the coordination of second-tier support services. London Action Trust provides second-tier support to 18 organisations, which are funded by London Councils to address anti-social behaviour, hate crime, and victimised communities. There is a particular overlap in client group between the anti-social behaviour strand of this work and the CYP Project. LVSC and London Action Trust have two organisations, in common, that they support through different London Councils funding streams; both are national organisations.

The coordination of support with London Action Trust has led to a joint event, with further

joint training planning taking place for Year 2. We received comments, during our telephone interviews with organisations, about the overload in the support offer where they are funded through more than one stream by London Councils. Each stream of London Councils funding comes with a different second-tier support service. There was also comment from frontline organisations that they did not always differentiate between the funder and second-tier organisations when feeling a sense of “email overload”.

Although the coordination of support provision between two separate organisations has a time implication, it is a way of working that is welcomed by London Councils and, if it works well, provides for more effective and efficient support. Already this joint working has meant that the two organisations can, together, offer a particular piece of high quality training, which would have been outside their financial scope to offer individually.

At the end of our telephone interviews, with the 17 supported organisations, we asked each of them to name three things that had been really good about the CYP Project's support during its first year. We have collated the answers under headings, which point to what frontline organisations are looking for in second-tier support.

Information

- Access to information
- Informative
- Provision of information
- Continual updating
- Receiving the information (even if we don't use it, it is useful to receive it).
- Website — resources and signposting
- Contact details of the grants officers and CVS (names, position, phone numbers, email addresses) in each area.

Communication

- Marie-Anne is very approachable
- Emails
- Ease of communication
- Contact with Marie-Anne
- Communication with Marie-Anne — and that it's so easy
- Ease of contact with Marie-Anne and her colleagues
- Direct contact — phone and information exchange

Training

- Training
- Training — vulnerable adults and child protection
- Breadth of training opportunities available
- Barnardo's Safeguarding training
- Offers of training from other organisations
- Good Practice Forum: Schools workshop
- Training — equalities

- The relevant training we've attended

Networking and sharing good practice

- Opportunity to share best practice
- Meeting up with other organisations
- Bringing together groups funded under the same service specification or same thematic area.
- Opportunities to network
- Linked me into different networks
- Healthy cross-section of funded organisations — gives us extra support in areas that we're already engaged with and insight into areas we're not already engaging with.
- Networking
- Opportunity to meet similar organisations doing similar work in London
- Networking

Availability of support

- Knowing that other support is available if we are looking for it
- Free
- Support in general (knowing it's there and having it available)
- Being a support to us / Having that support over the period of the grant is really important.
- Useful knowing that they are there if I have a problem — I may not take up the support, but it's reassuring to know it's available when needed (I should think that is really important to smaller organisations that don't have the level of internal support that we have).

Quality of support

- Marie-Anne has always been very sharp in understanding and good at giving useful pointers.
- Responsiveness — LVSC does listen and puts together workshops that are relevant and helpful. They do take feedback seriously.
- Helpful
- They are trying very hard to find out what people want and to get their feedback — that's good.
- They clearly want to use their resources to help
- Improved my knowledge around different areas
- Having the backing / support of an organisation (in LVSC) which is clearly structured and organised itself.

Organisational development

- Safeguarding resources [access to Sound Systems accreditation]
- The consultation we had at the start [one-to-one structured consultancy visits]
- Evaluation and increasing awareness of what we're doing
- Visits and one-to-ones: tailored help with monitoring — being shown how to use the

information that we've collected in our monitoring reports

Meeting statutory requirements

- Safeguarding support
- Making us aware of our legal obligations
- Safeguarding

Funding

- Grant [provided to improve specific access to services for client group]
- Funding

Provision of information, guidance and training

The CYP Project has run events, provided resources through specific pages on the LVSC website, sent emails and e-newsletters, and, during the fourth quarter of the year, set up an online forum. In our telephone interviews, we asked organisations about their use of different forms of communication with LVSC.

There was very low reported use of the website and online forum and high reported use of the e-newsletters (with which many interviewees mentioned general emails) and one-to-one contact with the CYP Project team. Whilst a detailed analysis of the way organisations are using the electronic resources is outside the scope of this evaluation, we would, however, make the following observations.

Reported use does not necessarily tally with actual use. Some interviewees made the point that they looked for information from a range of sources and did not necessarily remember what they found from particular websites. There was a high reported use of e-newsletters, during our telephone interviews: the statistics show a sizeable proportion of those delivered are unopened but of those that are opened, there is a high level of activity in terms of forwarding and clicking on links.

The online forum is a new approach, a few organisations have signed up to it and although interaction with it is proving slow, there is genuine interest. At the “End of Year Get Together” a quick poll of organisations present showed that about half were using social media in their work, and further expansion of the CYP Project's use of electronic resources was suggested in a request for podcasts.

On the following pages we have presented some of the data the CYP Project has collected about its events, website resources, and e-newsletters.

Events

The chart below shows the events held during the first year and the number of supported organisations that attended. Attendance figures are by organisation with number of people in parentheses where more than one person, from a supported organisation, was present.

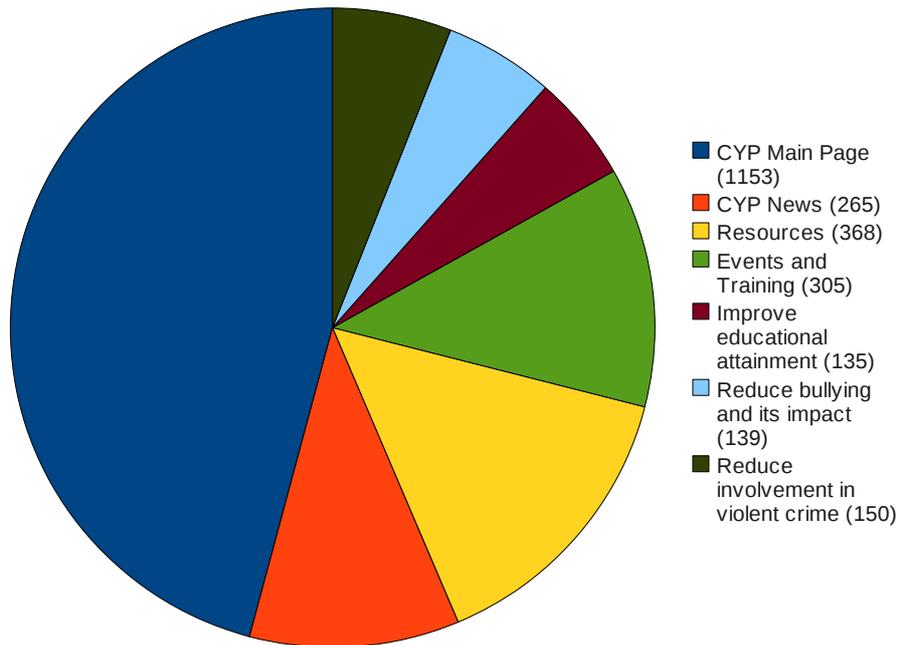


N.B. GPF is an abbreviation of Good Practice Forum

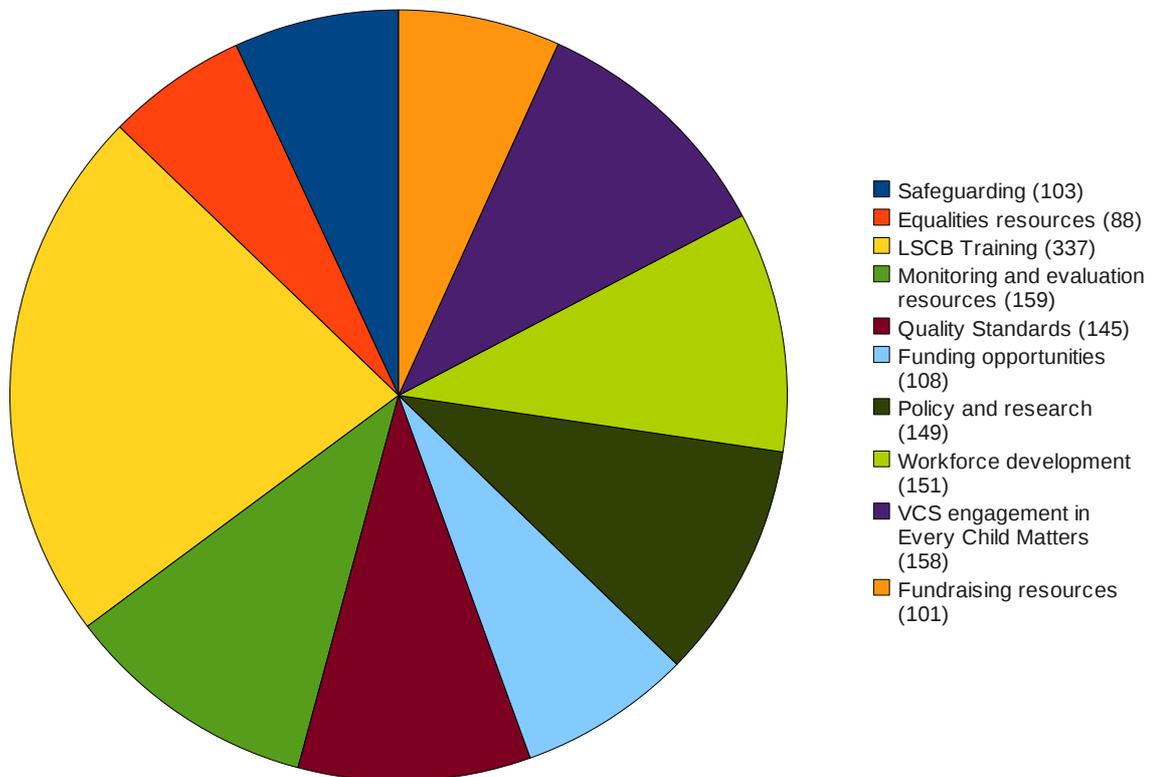
Website

The next two charts show the grouping of resources on the CYP pages of the LVSC website. The figures in parentheses are the number of web page hits measured in Quarter 3 of the first year.

The first chart shows the four main sections of the CYP pages and the grouping of resources under London Councils priority service areas.



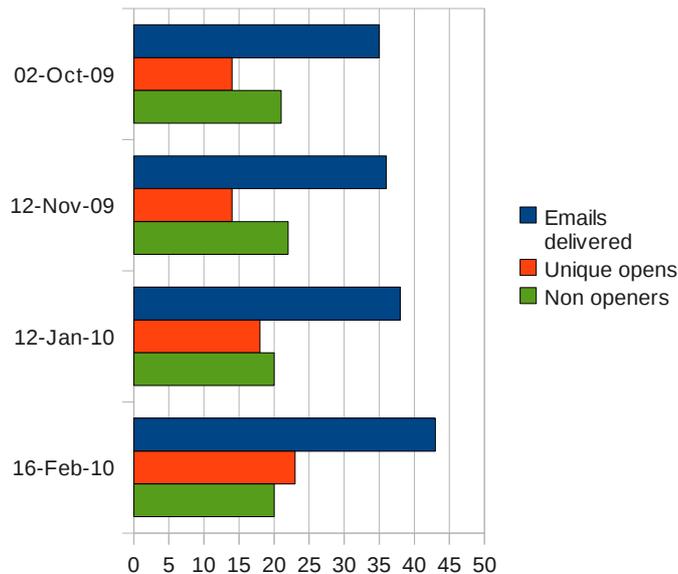
The second chart shows the range of resources, which are gathered by theme, under the “Resources” and the “Events and Training” sections.



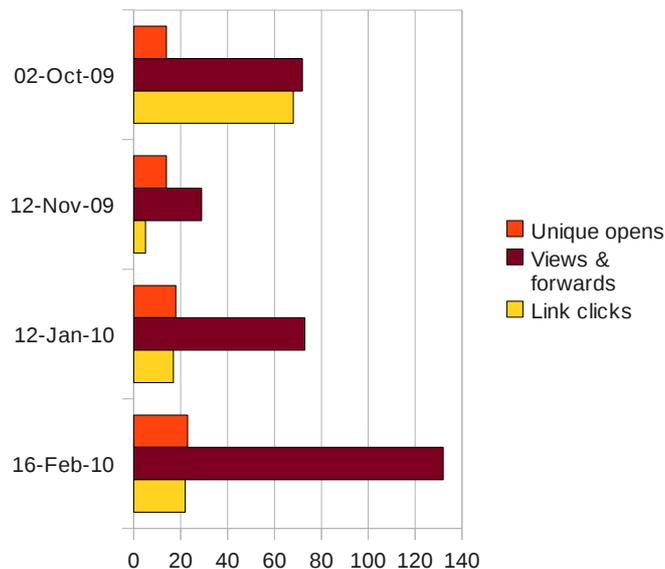
E-bulletins

Four e-bulletins were sent out during the first year containing a round up of news, details about events and training, and updates about resources.

The first chart shows the number of e-bulletins delivered, how many of those were opened and how many were not. The term “unique opens” refers to the e-bulletin being opened by a different recipient. “Non openers” are when the e-bulletin has been delivered, but the recipient did not open it.



The second chart shows the activities of those who did open the e-bulletin. The orange bar depicting unique opens is repeated. “Views and forwards” refers to the activity of reading through the e-bulletin and/or forwarding it to another person. “Link clicks” refers to the number of times any link, within the e-bulletin, is clicked.



Outcome 1 — Frontline organisations supported to develop higher quality services tailored to the needs of their clients, in their respected areas of specialist service.

In meeting this outcome, the CYP Project provided information about a range of training and good practice through outreach visits, the LVSC website and e-bulletins. Our measurement of success against the indicators for Year 1 is taken from answers, during the telephone interviews, to a direct question we asked and our analysis of responses to questions about events and communications.

We asked organisations how they had used the CYP Project's support to develop higher quality services and tailor their services to their clients' needs. Of the organisations, 10 said they had used the service to improve quality and gave examples; four said they had not; and two said they did not know.

Organisations made direct links between the CYP Project's outputs and identified a range of ways they had used the support to make improvements to the quality of their services. These were: a grant to produce information, which is targeted at a specific client group; support in implementing safeguarding; getting to know boroughs and building contacts; identifying training needs; training itself; support in monitoring; access to information; and structured, planned, one-to-one support.

Interviewees gave specific examples of how different types of support had had an impact on the quality of the services they are delivering. We have set out some examples of the comments that were made.

Impact of training: -

- “The training I've attended has improved my knowledge-base and therefore improved how I deliver the project.”
- “I hadn't ever had any official project management training because my background meant I'd brought in different skills. The course was one of the best pieces of training I have been on. It was a great group and the trainer was excellent. It's definitely given me skills to add to my collection and this will improve the quality of what I provide.”

Impact of information and communications: -

- Having up-to-date information. We have accessed the website and other organisations to make sure that what we're telling our counsellors is right — current and up-to-date.”

The process of support: -

- “Following through a programme of training”
- “I met Sharon Long^{*} and Marie-Anne at the very beginning of the project. I wanted

** Sharon Long is the VCS Engage Regional Manager. VCS Engage is an agency with a remit to increase the involvement of the voluntary sector in the Every Child Matters agenda.*

to talk about how to run it before it started. I had concerns about how to monitor and questions about what happens if we don't meet targets. Work with schools, later on, when I had specific needs.”

Where organisations had answered “no” or “don't know” to the direct question, we cross-referenced with their responses to our questions about the events they had attended and the CYP Project's communications. All the organisations made comments about particular pieces of support, and how they have used them, that relate to impact on quality or the tailoring of services. These were: sharing information and learning, internally, within their organisations; following the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) Sound Systems accreditation process; using training to improve the reach of their services; and setting the groundwork for strengthening the way that monitoring is used.

The first indicator for this outcome is that all 17 organisations will report improved practice and better understanding each year. This has been met for Year 1.

The second indicator is that 14 organisations will report improved services over four years, with a target of 13 organisations for Year 1. We have added the organisations that reported internal sharing of information and learning, or implementation of learning, to those that answered a clear “yes” to our direct question. On this basis we conclude that 14 organisations have reported improved services. This exceeds the target for Year 1 and shows the CYP Project to be on course for subsequent years.

Learning and recommendations

During some of the telephone interviews, we asked organisations how they identified the quality of their service. This probe was mainly made when interviewees answered that they had not used the support to improve quality. We are including the responses to this question to inform the CYP Project's planning in Years 2 to 4.

Organisations talked about monitoring using London Councils methods. The importance of supervision, supportive staff management, and regular verbal feedback were highlighted. They referred to drawing on a selection of sources when gathering feedback: the young people using their services, adults — parents / carers, staff, volunteers, and other professionals including staff in schools. They said that they carried out pre- and post-evaluation, and that they bench-marked internal evaluation with having their work externally evaluated.

The combining of all these methods to build the quality of service was summarised: -

“We put all of this together, in a systematic way, and it forms a base of information for us about our services.”

Quality is a broad term. The way that organisations responded to the direct question, and the examples given of how they identify quality in their services, has demonstrated this breadth. It encompasses robust monitoring and evaluation, being able to work well with other organisations, understanding the context of work, having reliable systems in place,

promoting equality, and creating a safe operating environment. These elements are addressed more specifically through the other seven outcomes for the CYP Project.

There is also an aspect of leading by example. The CYP Project has established itself during the first year as a reliable and responsive service. This is recognised in comments made about the ease of communications, feedback about both the ambiance and content of events, and a number of specific references to a strong sense of being listened to and the service being shaped according to need.

Outcome 2 — Frontline organisations enabled to work together strategically, plan the most effective way to deliver services, share good practice, and build upon each other's knowledge and expertise.

In meeting this outcome, the CYP Project held focus groups to share good practice and plan effectively; built on expertise and knowledge through network events and facilitating exchange visits; and encouraged organisations to share good practice through network events, e-bulletins, and web-based good practice tools.

Our measurement of success against the indicators for Year 1 is taken from answers to a question about using LVSC's support to make links with other networks; responses to questions about events attended and communications; analysis of web-based materials; and observation at the events held on 17 and 30 March.

Three focus group events were held over the course of the year. These were: two good practice forums — one on monitoring and evaluation and one on working with schools — and one information training session on the NCVYS Sound Systems accreditation scheme. A total of 14 different organisations took part in these events: three of these organisations took part in two of the events.

All three organisations that did not attend any of the above focus group events, individually reported examples of linking with other organisations, in the CYP Project's network, around planning effective service delivery and sharing good practice. In the first case initial links had been formed and joint working discussed, although this had not been developed. In the second case, the organisation described definite plans to contact one of the other organisations, for their experience of the NCVYS Sound Systems accreditation process, to help them decide if it was a good route for them to follow. In the third case the organisation summarised how they had used the CYP Project to make connections: -

“Through links on email newsletters and information. We may not have spoken to the people but we have certainly accessed others' websites. And we have included those links in our training as useful places to get information.”

A set of good practice guidelines on working with schools is in development to be completed during the first quarter of Year 2. In addition, the website content (see page 10)

shows a selection of good practice resources, gathered from a range of sources and grouped by theme, including: monitoring and evaluation; improving educational attainment; safeguarding; and quality assurance specific to the children and young people's sector. These resources are available to all 17 organisations.

The first indicator for this outcome is a number of organisations involved in focus groups delivering at least one set of good practice guidelines, each year, for all 17 organisations. This target has mainly been met.

A high proportion of organisations (14) has been directly involved in focus groups. One organisation that did not take part in any of the three focus groups is contributing to the production of the current set of good practice guidelines, raising the level of involvement to 15 organisations. We have recognised the collation of website resources as contributing to this outcome. Completion of the set of good practice guidelines on working with schools is, however, still outstanding at the end of Year 1.

The CYP Project is comfortably on course in terms of focus group involvement and it has responded well to organisations' information needs in its approach to gathering website resources. The expectation of "at least one" set of good practice guidelines needs to be set within the context of the first year of a project, realistic appraisal of the time and knowledge needed to produce documents, and the fact that production of the guidelines is at an advanced stage. In addition the CYP Project is in a good position, for Year 2, in having already decided its theme for good practice guidelines, as set out in the funding agreement.

The second indicator is that 10 organisations will report improved planning of services through linking with others, with a target of nine in Year 1.

During the interviews, organisations referred to different ways they had improved the planning of services through linking with others. These were: incorporating updates on big policy issues into their work; raising their awareness of equalities and legal obligations, and putting these into practice; using training to look at unification of practice across services and boroughs; learning from shared good practice to plan monitoring systems; sharing information, internally, about funding opportunities; and consultancy.

Eight organisations cited improvements through at least one of the methods above. This is slightly below the target for Year 1. The "End of Year Get Together" on 30 March included a joint planning session to inform the CYP Project's support for Year 2 and establish some shared themes. Nine organisations took part in this event, which the London Councils Grants Officer for the CYP Project (and some of the supported organisations) also attended; this work will contribute to meeting the target in Years 2 to 4.

The third indicator for this outcome is that 14 organisations will report good practice lessons learnt, from other organisations, with a target of 13 in Year 1. During our telephone interviews, 14 organisations reported good practice learning through their comments about events, use of information, and exchange visits. This exceeds the target for Year 1 and shows the CYP Project to be on course for subsequent years.

It is useful to note that the three organisations that did not report any good practice learning, all reported sharing good practice with other organisations in the network.

Learning and Recommendations

The opportunity for networking was cited as one of the most valuable types of support the CYP Project offers. Sharing resources outside events has mainly been at an individual level, which makes it difficult for the CYP Project to demonstrate joint planning or draw out benefits from these links for the wider network.

There is a task for the CYP Project in facilitating this process with the network. Setting up the online forum helps to address this requirement by providing a shared space for group discussion. Making the online forum work fully, as a shared space, would need planning and is a time commitment.

During our telephone interviews, people talked about how having met someone at an event they were more likely to contact them. Being able to share knowledge was really valued: -

“Next week, an organisation is coming in to get support and to get ideas about setting up a mentoring service. It’s nice to be able to use the network to pass on information in that way.”

Organisations add to their own development and learning by sharing their knowledge. If the CYP Project can capture ways of demonstrating this organisational benefit, it would also contribute to meeting Outcomes 3 and 4 which focus on sharing information and demonstrating impact.

Organisations reported little or no use of the CYP Project to make links with other networks, although there was high awareness of Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF), the network for all London Councils funded organisations (and also coordinated by LVSC). The CYP Project might consider mapping the networks with which it has connections to help make these more accessible to the organisations it supports. Clear information about the roles of networks that the CYP Project introduces at events, or through the online forum, is also important.

Outcome 3 — The network of funded organisations working in the service area enabled to share knowledge, information and data about the services provided, and the needs of their client group, in order to contribute to the policy development process.

In meeting this outcome, the CYP Project delivered the outputs set out above under Outcome 2 with the additional activities of: raising issues of concern for feedback to the wider network and policy makers; producing reports of focus groups — including

engagement from funded organisations; and reporting results to policy makers and other key partners.

Our measurement of success against the indicators for Year 1, is taken from answers to questions about using LVSC's support as a network of organisations, working in a specific CYP service area, and in engaging with shaping and developing that support; organisations' involvement at the events; and discussion with LVSC, London Councils, and London Action Trust officers.

The first indicator for this outcome is that 12 organisations will report improvements in sharing knowledge, information and data, with a target of 10 for Year 1. We made an initial calculation of organisations that had made a presentation about their services at an event with those, not included in the first count, who talked about sharing information and knowledge between, or as a result of, events. We also observed one organisation referencing findings of a survey they had carried out, with service users, to inform a discussion about equalities monitoring, at one of the events we attended.

Including this observation of specific key knowledge and data-sharing, with our initial calculation, 10 organisations have reported improvements in sharing knowledge, information and data about the services provided and needs of their client group. This meets the target for Year 1.

The second indicator is that 12 organisations will report improvements in understanding the needs of their client group, with a target of 10 for Year 1. Improvements in understanding needs of their client group were reported by 10 organisations, thereby meeting this target.

The way these improvements were reported (with the breakdown) is: application and awareness of safeguarding (2); improvements in reaching young people through schools (1); availability and use of advice from a speaker at an event (1); broadening knowledge, from other organisations, through events and information (3); and improving understanding of needs in the context of equalities (3).

The third indicator is that six policy issues are raised with the wider network and policy makers, each year. The following policy issues have been raised.

1. Vetting and barring concerns of network members raised with the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) — the CYP Project Launch event included an afternoon session on vetting and barring. An invitation to the afternoon session was extended to members of the Second-Tier Advisers Network (STAN), the London development workers network coordinated by LVSC. The session included questions and answers, from the networks, to the DCSF speaker. Further input was gathered from both the CYP Project network and STAN participants, following the event, and this was passed on to the DCSF.
2. London Children's Manifesto — the CYP Project's policy event in November 2009, "How London Works: CYP Sector" fed into the development of the London Children's Manifesto. The London Children's Manifesto, produced by the London

- Child Policy Forum (a 15-strong coalition that is chaired by Children England), sets out steps for Government and funders in supporting, funding and the accountability of the voluntary sector in improving outcomes for children and young people.
3. Project Oracle representation — the CYP Project made a recommendation for London Action Trust (LAT) to be part of Project Oracle. Project Oracle is the Mayor's "Time for Action" plan on "Equipping Young People for the Future and Preventing Violence". This input is held at a senior level and feedback is made via the Director of LAT and the Chief Executive of LVSC.
 4. Project Oracle informing network members — the CYP Project informed organisations about Project Oracle through direct email and circulation of information from the Greater London Authority (GLA).
 5. London Councils commissioning process — the CYP Project ensured the attendance of LVSC's Policy and Networks Development Officer, who coordinates VSF, at events. He told us about the value of being able to speak directly to groups, about the commissioning consultations, and how this meant he was able "to firmly get the voice of the children and young people's sector". Feedback on the consultation was given by London Councils at "Your London Councils Grant Unravelling" on 17 March. The CYP Project produced a shortened version of London Councils' consultation, specifically for children and young people's organisations, although this gathered no responses.

This indicator for raising policy issues has mainly been met and the CYP Project is on course for subsequent years.

Learning and recommendations

The CYP Project has been effective in its initiative to encourage one or more organisations to present at each event. This is a good way of involving organisations without involvement being onerous. We saw a lot of interaction between participants at both events in March, with questions about each other's areas of work, and the CYP Organisational Support Officer facilitating a supportive atmosphere and building trust.

The CYP Project team has made contacts and built relationships, bridging policy work initiated before the start of the project. Joint working with the VCS Engage Regional Manager has brought in specific support, through one-to-one consultancy with organisations, at a borough-based local level. Those organisations that received this support reported that the specialist knowledge and one-to-one delivery had been helpful.

In relation to bridging policy work initiated prior to the project, we did notice that some information on the LVSC website about children and young people's sector commissioning remains unlinked to the CYP Project's web pages. It may be useful for the CYP Project to review this information to decide if it is worth incorporating into its collection of resources.

It is important for the CYP Project to understand organisations' expectations around engaging in policy work. Some frustrations were expressed, during our interviews, about power to influence the policy development process.

- “We've used the network to share thoughts and experiences — that doesn't mean we're influencing policy.”
- “We have tried to get involved with policy work, in the past, but nothing seems to make a difference and we haven't got time.”

The CYP Project tends to report back on policy issues raised through e-newsletters, which is a useful route. However, more could be done to bring policy issues to life. For example, the production of the London Children's Manifesto is an opportunity to spend five minutes at an event giving participants a copy, explaining what it is, describing the input of various parties, and linking the input made by organisations through the CYP Project.

There may be some value in the CYP Project looking at why their work to produce a shortened version London Councils' commissioning consultation did not bring about the response they expected. This is important in avoiding duplication and may identify more effective ways of getting responses to future consultations.

Outcome 4 — The network of funded organisations working in the service area enabled to develop and use a system of data collection and information management in order to reflect upon the patterns of service provided across London, and to enable monitoring, review and assessment of the impact of services by the sector.

In meeting this outcome, the CYP Project gathered information on methods of collecting data; held a focus group to share and develop effective monitoring and data collection methods (with written guidelines and focus on impact assessment planned for Year 2); and shared methods of data gathering and measuring impact.

Our measurement of success against the two indicators for Year 1 has been taken from feedback following the good practice forum on monitoring and evaluation, held in December 2009; organisations' reports on intensive one-to-one work; responses to our questions about equalities monitoring; and feedback from London Councils on the first monitoring reports.

The first indicator for this outcome is that 12 organisations will report improvements in their systems of data collection and information management, with a target of 10 in Year 1. Six organisations took part in the good practice forum on monitoring and evaluation. A further organisation received one-to-one support, which included looking at their monitoring systems. Seven organisations have worked on their systems of data collection and information management, which will have led to improvements. This is below the target for Year 1 and shows the CYP Project to be behind in meeting its targets in subsequent years.

One organisation described the depth of support they had received and the decisions they had been able to make as a result: -

“We talked about monitoring in sessions with Sharon Long. We looked at how to set up a database. The sessions also helped in working out how to gather information for the monitoring forms. Since then, we're now in the process of looking for a central database. We've decided that keeping spreadsheets is not sufficient for our needs, as an organisation as a whole.”

The second indicator, relevant to Year 1, is improved data collection and information management practice reported by 14 organisations, with a target of 13 in Year 1. In calculating progress for this indicator we took the number of organisations that had improved their systems for data collection and information management, the figure from the first indicator. To this we added those organisations that had not been counted in the first indicator, but had either attended the “Your London Councils Grant Unravelling” event, on 17 March, or had issues raised after their first monitoring period (to March 2009), which the CYP Project worked with London Councils and the organisations themselves in addressing.

During the event on 17 March, London Councils officers gave feedback on the monitoring returns and insight into the London Councils process once monitoring returns are received. There was also an exercise on looking at equalities monitoring.

In addition to those organisations counted for the first indicator, three organisations attended “Your London Councils Grant Unravelling”, and a further three organisations addressed issues brought up by London Councils after the first monitoring return. We conclude that 13 organisations have improved data collection and information management, which meets the target for Year 1.

Learning and recommendations

The CYP Project has found it difficult to meet the target of 10 organisations reporting improvements in their systems of data collection and information management. However, where organisations have reported improvements, some of the reports have been of significant changes. One organisation described the good practice forum on monitoring and evaluation as “inspirational” and went on to explain: -

“As an organisation, we have travelled a long distance in a short space time. The example of a system at that event really gave the bare bones for our system here, and we were able to tailor the system to our own needs. Now we've implemented the new system, we've really improved the accuracy of monitoring our service. Both our quantitative and qualitative monitoring has improved, and our monitoring is now much more specific to our organisation and its services.”

Another organisation said that the organisational health check, which was a piece of consultancy support they received, helped them to improve their data collection and information management by working through the process and planning on a one-to-one basis.

The CYP Project may want to consider if it would be more effective to focus on more

intensive support for a smaller number of organisations.

There are two additional indicators in meeting this outcome, which have been set to be achieved by the end of Year 2. The first is that good practice guidelines on data collection and monitoring will be developed. These guidelines will improve the CYP Project's ability to meet its first target. With the two additional indicators for Year 2, the crossover of this outcome's aims with those of Outcome 6 (increased ability of organisations to monitor, effectively, the impact of their work), and in supporting organisations with equalities monitoring, this area of work is set to be a theme for the coming year.

The CYP Project is developing its own information systems through its web-based resources, which will benefit the supported organisations in shared learning. It has gathered a detailed description of one organisation's systems of data collection and information management systems through commissioning a case study. There is scope to expand its gathering of information from organisations on methods of collecting data.

Outcome 5 — The network of funded organisations working in the service area enabled specifically to focus on the needs of equalities target groups through: providing enhanced second-tier support to equalities-led groups; and supporting generic service providers to address the needs of equalities groups more effectively.

We were asked to give additional focus to equalities and meeting this outcome as part of our evaluation. This request included identifying “equalities-led groups” — whether that be led-by or specifically serving equalities target groups; how far needs had been assessed; how widely LVSC should be approaching equalities; and what equalities means to children and young people's organisations.

This was set within the context of frontline groups experiencing difficulties in asking equalities monitoring questions, and London Councils' emphasis on the importance of collecting data to inform future funding priorities. London Councils' feedback is that religion and belief, and sexual orientation are the most under-reported areas on monitoring returns. There is also concern that organisations had not attended the London Councils equalities monitoring training, which was a mandatory element of their funding.

In meeting this outcome, the CYP Project provided consultancy support to equalities-led organisations; held a focus group on equalities issues to improve practice; and facilitated exchange visits with equalities-led organisations to look at issues of delivery for and by equalities communities.

Our measurement of success in meeting this outcome is taken from the data about consultancy support provided to equalities-led organisations; attendance, input, and feedback from “Your London Councils Grant Unravelled” on 17 March; comments made about the London Councils equalities training, during our telephone interviews, and

attendance at that training; and comments made about exchange visits.

We approached the request to give additional focus to equalities by opening discussion, with organisations, through their understanding of “equalities-led” in relation to their own organisations. We asked that question directly with a follow-up of what that meant to their organisations. This was not about seeking a “right or wrong” answer, but more about recognising how people define terminology and highlighting assumptions in the way the language of equalities is used.

The majority of interviewees answered that their organisations were equalities-led. They went on to describe that as having a strong ethos around equalities, which runs through their organisation, and the linking of policy to practice. In some cases the question led to further discussion about what we meant by equalities-led.

In setting out its expectations of second-tier organisations in promoting equality, London Councils specifies the needs of frontline organisations “led-by and/or specifically serving equalities target groups”. Five of the supported organisations would fit this definition: four of these in relation to “Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities” and one in relation to “lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people”.

The first indicator for Outcome 5 relates to the part of the outcome about providing enhanced second-tier support to equalities-led groups. The indicator is that a minimum of five equalities-led organisations, per year, will improve quality through consultancy support.

In analysing progress we looked, again, at the measurements of success under Outcome 1 (developing higher quality services tailored to clients' needs). Of the three organisations that did not report improved services, against that indicator for Outcome 1, one was an equalities-led organisation.

All organisations received at least one outreach visit during Year 1, and all outreach visits contained elements of consultancy. All five equalities-led organisations, therefore, received consultancy in some form. Structured one-to-one development work has taken place with three of the equalities-led organisations; the other two equalities-led organisations are following the process of NCVYS Sound Systems accreditation, in which the CYP Project is supporting them.

The second indicator is that all 17 organisations, per year, will report improved practice and better understanding of the issues. Four organisations did not attend either “Your London Councils Grant Unravelling” or one of the London Councils equalities training days. Nine organisations attended one or the other, and four attended both.

Feedback about the equalities monitoring part of “Your London Councils Grant Unravelling” and comments about London Councils equalities training were that they contained useful information and were interesting. The networking elements and opportunities for discussion were valued. Although aspects of each raised some criticism — issues with temperature at the venue, not being quite what was expected, not enough time for discussion — the general sense was that they had been useful.

On the basis of attendance at one or both events, and the positive elements of feedback, 13 organisations have reported improved practice and better understanding of equalities issues. This means the CYP Project has not met its target in Year 1.

One of the outputs for this outcome is exchange visits with equalities-led organisations to look at issues of delivery for and by equalities communities. One organisation talked about exchange visits with an equalities-led organisation. We are including long quote from them because it demonstrates the additional value brought by this exchange.

“The first time PACE came they spoke to staff in a team meeting. They made us aware of their existence (although some of the staff had heard of PACE and were previously aware of the organisation); the way they work and how they work with young people. From that session we thought that hearing directly from PACE would be really good for our volunteer counsellors (rather than just hearing about them from the supervisors). Someone from PACE came and gave a 45-minute talk, with a question and answer session, about their work with LGBT youth.

This has had an impact on our service. Certainly from what volunteers said in their questions, because it became quite clear that some of our counsellors were not very well-versed in LGBT issues and the resources available. Of course it was only the London volunteers who got that experience.”

Learning and recommendations

Organisations have expressed some general challenges: -

- “Ensuring equality of access is a work in progress. We have policies in place to address wider equalities, although this is an area that does need some work — we could always do more or do it better.”
- “Sometimes with equalities training it is easier said than done — putting theory / the training into practice.”

Both events raised some unmet learning needs. From the London Councils equalities training these included: difficulty in applying what was being talked about and finding transferable issues, and not getting the understanding wanted about the Equality Bill. “Your London Councils Grant Unravelling” raised monitoring issues, particularly around the monitoring of sexual orientation. This concern also came up during our telephone interviews: -

“We do have an issue with some elements — asking about sexual orientation: we don't think it's an appropriate thing to ask young people and we're not entirely comfortable asking our mentors either.”

Suggestions were made on the feedback forms from “Your London Councils Grant Unravelling” about further support: a workshop on asking equal opportunities questions and

training on monitoring sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Some joint training is being agreed by the CYP Project with London Action Trust. London Action Trust has also mentioned equalities impact assessment training, which the CYP Project may want to find out more about.

London Councils does not currently make it a requirement for organisations to monitor sexual orientation with people under the age of 16. Monitoring sexual orientation is something that some organisations find difficult regardless of age. It would be useful in planning training to take this into account. It is also important to ensure that the message of London Councils' expectations is clear. During our telephone interviews and at the event on 17 March there was a sense, from organisations, that London Councils was fine about some areas of equalities monitoring being avoided.

Focusing on the needs of young people in the 11–15 age group, one organisation talked about research they had carried out; the CYP Project may be able to use that organisation's knowledge with the wider network.

Whilst the under-reporting in the areas highlighted by London Councils needs to be addressed, the CYP Project should keep in mind that this is not the only difficulty organisations find with equalities monitoring and practice.

- “It can be quite difficult in terms of the target group I'm working with. Young people don't necessarily want to fill in the forms. They are unsure about what they put down and what should they write — that balance between what is and what they think they should be saying. For example, some young people don't know what ethnic background they're from.”
- “Sometimes it's very difficult. With the overall monitoring system it is difficult to identify nationalities.”

The CYP Project has made a good start in meeting needs around equalities. It is widening its consideration of children and young people as an equalities target group. It is being sensitive in its approach to ensuring that it is supporting organisations to provide appropriate and accessible services.

Outcome 6 – Increased ability of organisations to monitor, effectively, the impact of their work.

In meeting this outcome, the CYP Project shared monitoring and impact measurement methods and tools through its website, e-bulletins, and exchange visits. It held events and focus groups to share monitoring and impact measurement methods and tools, and to improve methods of impact assessment.

There is an overlap between the delivery of this outcome and Outcome 4 (data collection and information management to reflect on patterns and impact of services by the sector). We have interpreted the focus of Outcome 4 as being about identifying patterns and

themes across the service area, and Outcome 6 being focused on the more one-to-one development work of building capacity, within individual organisations, to monitor their impact.

Our measurement of success against the indicators for Year 1 is taken from answers to a direct question asked in our survey; feedback from the good practice forum on monitoring and evaluation; visits between organisations to share monitoring experience, one-to-one support, and work the CYP Project is doing, with organisations, to develop case studies.

We asked all the organisations how they had used the CYP Project's support to help them monitor the impact of their work. Three organisations said they had used the CYP Project's support in this way, two said they had used it indirectly, and 12 organisations said they had not used it.

We also acknowledged the work that the CYP Project is doing with organisations to support them in producing case studies of their work. During Year 1 two organisations produced case studies. Both organisations that produced case studies were not among the three organisations that said they had used the CYP Project's support to help them monitor the impact of their work, although both had also attended the good practice forum on monitoring and evaluation.

A further two organisations answered that they had not used the support to help them monitor the impact of their work, but had attended the good practice forum on monitoring and evaluation. Both these organisations have taken part in exchange visits: one to share information directly about monitoring systems and one to share information about their work and their client group.

We have combined those who answered “yes” and “indirectly” to the direct question with those who answered “no” but had produced a case study and/or attended the good practice forum on monitoring and evaluation. Using these figures we calculate that nine organisations have improved their effectiveness in monitoring and impact assessment.

The only indicator for this outcome, directly relevant to Year 1, is that 14 organisations will report improved effectiveness in monitoring and impact assessment, with a target of 12 in Year 1. This is not currently being met and shows the CYP Project to be behind in meeting its targets for subsequent years.

Learning and recommendations

As referred to in our discussion of Outcome 4 monitoring, and its associated elements, is emerging as a theme for Year 2. Some organisations that missed the good practice forum on monitoring and evaluation have said they would be interested in a repeat event. At the “End of Year Get Together” data collection and monitoring was identified as a medium priority and impact assessments as a high priority.

Developing the skills of organisations in being able to demonstrate impact takes the work during Year 1, to support organisations in monitoring and evaluation, to the next level. As

one organisation expressed it: -

“Our needs are more about how we present the impact and monitoring information that we gather. We are hoping that support will help us to present that information better and to make better use of it.”

The good practice guidelines, that form an additional indicator for this outcome in Year 2, will also help the CYP Project to meet the target for organisations reporting improved effectiveness in monitoring and impact assessment. There are noticeable differences between organisations in their capacity to monitor the impact of their work, so it is likely that the CYP Project will need to tailor its support.

Organisations talked about other types of support they had used in helping them monitor and assess their impact. One had used a think-tank to carry out some research on the impact of its work. Another said that all their managers had completed Charities Evaluation Services' advanced monitoring and evaluation training which, they reported, was “really in-depth”.

The CYP Project carried out some work with organisations, in the fourth quarter of Year 1, to support them in producing case studies. This was not particularly identified by organisations as helping them with monitoring impact, but could be a useful contribution. Case studies are often cited as a good way for organisations to demonstrate the impact of their services.

There has been a slow return on case studies. Two organisations had completed a case study, at the time of this report, and a further two organisations are due to complete one. All 17 organisations were invited, and the CYP Project will have to monitor if the offer of a financial incentive (£500 for each organisation that completed a case study) has been an effective approach.

There may be useful ongoing work for the CYP Project in enabling organisations to produce case studies. This would help organisations to demonstrate their own impact and also help the CYP Project to collect information and data that would contribute to determining impact across the service area. It may be that the CYP Project will need to support organisations in a more direct way to produce case studies.

Outcome 7 — Increased links between funded organisations, boroughs, and relevant statutory agencies.

In meeting this outcome, the CYP Project provided individual advice and consultancy; network and training sessions on working with local authorities; raised issues of concern with feedback to the wider network and policy makers; and attended relevant meetings.

Our measurement of success against the indicator for Year 1 is taken from answers to a direct question, during our telephone interviews, about improving work with local

authorities; feedback about the good practice forum on working with schools; observation at the events on 17 and 30 March; and discussion with LVSC officers.

In answer to our direct question, seven organisations said that they had used the CYP Project to improve their work with local authorities. Three of the organisations that said they had not used the support to improve this work, had attended the good practice forum on working with schools and the feedback from this session was positive. Part of the planning session at the “End of Year Get Together” was a formative evaluation exercise on working with local authorities. A further three organisations took part in this event.

“Your London Councils Grant Unravelling” gave organisations direct contact with London Councils officers, with updates about contacting borough officers and Strategic Monitoring Zones. We counted another organisation, not already included in our calculation for this indicator, because they attended this event.

The indicator for this outcome is that 10 organisations will report improved links with statutory agencies and local authorities. Our conclusion is that 14 organisations have shown improved links with statutory agencies and local authorities, as a result of the CYP Project's support, and the target has been exceeded.

Additionally, the CYP Organisational Support Officer has obtained Extended Schools Remodelling Advisers' contact details, in different boroughs, for three organisations. Two organisations have received one-to-one consultancy with the VCS Engage Regional Manager, in which there was a focus on making links at a local authority level. These organisations have already been counted in our calculation, but we include the examples as they portray the deeper levels of support and additional value the CYP Project brings.

A nice piece of feedback that the CYP Organisational Support Officer received was: -

- “Thank you for all your assistance on working with schools, it has really helped to fire up my enthusiasm and to use this more effectively.”

One organisation said, about the good practice forum on working with schools, that of the four events they had attended: -

- “This was the most relevant event/training for us. Marie-Anne organised the session as a result of visits to our organisation and looking at what we'd find useful.”

Another organisation described how they would use what they learned: -

- “We will be re-doing a lot of our publicity, over the next few months, and I'll tailor it a lot more to target schools.”

The activities that contribute to Outcome 3 around raising policy issues have a crossover with this outcome. Raising concerns about vetting and barring with the DCSF and input into London Councils commissioning agenda are particularly relevant to improving links with statutory agencies.

Learning and recommendations

Meeting the outcomes that relate to monitoring and safeguarding also contributed to meeting this outcome, during Year 1. In response to our question about using the CYP Project's support to improve quality, one organisation talked about the impact that the support had on their monitoring systems and how that had, in turn, improved their ability to meet local authority targets.

“We have used that support. We're constantly reviewing the services we offer to young people. Using our monitoring system we look internally at our statistics against the Local Authority's targets and we do adapt our service against needs. For the Youth Opportunities Fund (another of our funding streams) there is an enormous document setting out targets against the Children's Action Plan and we take steps to meet those targets. We can now support what we say about how we are meeting those targets with statistics to back up what we say.”

The crossover with meeting Outcome 8, which relates to safeguarding was expressed by another organisation: -

“Safeguarding training helped in terms of my work and understanding the procedures to follow in different local authorities.”

One-to-one consultancy and the good practice forum on working with schools have improved organisations' abilities to make their own links: -

“We've started talking more with schools ... We now make use of the Ofsted criteria when we are talking to schools about our work and our services.”

As would be expected, relationships tend to be strongest in boroughs where organisations are physically based and where organisations have been operating over a long period of time. The CYP Project's support in brokering new relationships was something a number of organisations said would be really useful.

- “It would be good to have help to make connections with the relevant people / sections in the educational departments in local authorities. It's often hard to find the right person but when we do make those connections it's enormously helpful in our work.”
- “What would be most useful, for us, is looking at how we can target through the local safeguarding boards. Finding our way through the networks to find the right people. If we could get support with that, it would be really helpful.”

Another organisation talked about how they wanted to improve the way they worked together with social services departments.

This role, for the the CYP Project, was also highlighted in our observations of organisations expressing frustration in communicating with borough officers. There is

some work for the CYP Project in promoting organisations' understanding of roles within local authorities and the expectations local authorities have about return on investment in London Councils funding.

At the “End of Year Get Together” the priority that organisations identified, for support in working with local authorities, was a coordinated package from London Councils and LVSC regarding local authority contacts and systems: with information-sharing between LVSC, Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS), and London Councils. The CYP Project has made little contact with Strategic Monitoring Zones and this is an area for development. It is not clear how far the CYP Project is making use of LVSC's connections with local CVS and ChangeUp consortia to improve its borough links.

The CYP Project has made good contact with CYP Together, the network of borough-based development officers who have a remit for children and young people's voluntary sector development work, in London, hosted by London Youth. Internal links with VSF and STAN have been brought out, on a practical level, through inviting involvement at events and follow-up engagement.

Outcome 8 — Increased standards in child protection policies and implementation in funded organisations.

In meeting this outcome the CYP Project focused on child protection policy, and its implementation, through networking events and training, and monitoring improvements and changes in standards and implementation.

Our measurement of success against the indicator for Year 1 is taken from answers to a direct question, asked during our telephone interviews; comments on the vetting and barring session that was part of the CYP Project's Launch event; comments about London Councils safeguarding training, which was delivered by Barnardo's; feedback from the NCVYS Sound Systems accreditation session; and discussion at the “End of Year Get Together” on 30 March.

It has been difficult to separate the work of the CYP Project, from the work of London Councils, when analysing the CYP Project's role in organisations reporting increased standards in child protection. London Councils provided mandatory training through Barnardo's for all the supported organisations. Organisations do not necessarily see a difference in where support comes from as it is the net result that is important to them.

With the changes in legislation that took effect from October 2009, safeguarding became a theme for the CYP Project in Year 1. The CYP Project is offering all the supported organisations the opportunity to complete NCVYS Sound Systems accreditation, the cost of which is covered by the support service.

We asked organisations how they had used LVSC's support to improve and implement child protection policies. In some form, 13 organisations reported increased standards in

child protection policies and the implementation of child protection procedures. Some referred directly to the training they received, making specific reference to the London Councils safeguarding training, and the vetting and barring session at the CYP Project Launch. Others talked about updating policies, highlighting what they needed to do, raising awareness, and finding out about the NCVYS Sound Systems quality mark.

Organisations talked about how they had used the training to implement practice. Some interviewees had shared the information across their organisations; used the training to develop additional information; and brought learning back into their organisations to do some internal team training.

One organisation said of the London Councils safeguarding training, delivered by Barnardo's: -

“It brought up questions of implementation and clarified what we needed to be looking at. Although we have our own child protection training, I used it to check my knowledge of internal policy. I went back from the training and talked with my manager about our internal policy. I found that all is in order, but we did check, and it was useful as a check.”

The indicator for this outcome is that 12 organisations will report increased standards in child protection policies and improved implementation of child protection procedures, with a target of 10 in Year 1. This has been exceeded.

Learning and recommendations

An area the CYP Project was interested in finding out more about was how connected organisations are to Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). When we asked organisations if they were involved with LSCBs, there was a fairly even split between organisations saying yes, no, and something in between.

Where organisations said they were involved, it was often particularly in their local borough. Receiving information, keeping in touch and accessing training were examples given. Some organisations talked about there being a lot of training available through their LSCB, which they were also able to pass on to their volunteers. In some cases organisations did refer to attending LSCB meetings and having a role in other statutory local panels.

The CYP Organisational Support Officer, in coordination with VCS Engage, is starting to attend London Safeguarding Children Board meetings. This recognises the link between LSCBs and regional work. In developing child protection policies, organisations referred to receiving support from their LSCB and accessing information from the London Safeguarding Children Board, as well as receiving support from the DCSF and the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).

Four organisations are taking part in the NCVYS Sound Systems accreditation. One organisation talked about what was involved in the accreditation at the “End of Year Get Together”, the benefits it was bringing, and how they were using it as a focus to improve

their quality. This was useful for understanding and discussion. Attendees were able to discuss how it compares with other quality assurance marks and hear that the CYP Project is able to meet training needs that are flagged through the process.

One organisation we spoke to said that they had considered doing the NCVYS Sound Systems accreditation but, when they looked into it, found it too demanding and too complex. There may be scope for the CYP Project to follow up this comment with the offer of NCVYS Safe Systems, a more basic assessment, which takes the form of a policy and procedure check carried out by email.

At the “End of Year Get Together” advanced safeguarding training was identified as a medium priority. Continuous dialogue and work on implementation were highlighted, during our telephone interviews, as a direction for the CYP Project in Years 2 to 4.

One organisation gave a very detailed example of how they had applied the learning from a particular case study, about recognising signs of potential neglect in a young child, directly in their work with a young parent. This example may be helpful to consider with organisations that found less transferable use with the training, either because they are a step removed from direct contact with a client group or because they have the resource of a team that is specifically responsible for child protection.

“Where support has been most useful is around the more murky areas of safeguarding — helping to unpick some of the complexities and being able to apply these in a practical way.”

Conclusion

The CYP Project has delivered a successful first year. It has launched a good quality, responsive service, with group events and one-to-one support. There has been a high level of involvement across its activities and it has met the challenge of providing relevant support to 17 organisations that are diverse in size, experience, and geographical location.

Strengths

Networking was cited as being one of the most valuable types of support that the CYP Project provides. The CYP team has put a lot of effort into building relationships, getting to know organisations, and offering support that is tailored to needs. The environment, planning and content of events is effective in creating a good atmosphere for learning and sharing knowledge.

Developing quality, sharing good practice, and connecting with the children and young people's policy agenda, are outcomes that have been achieved. It has made good links with relevant networks and other agencies. It is developing appropriate partnerships for delivery.

Communication is clear and the CYP Project is using a range of media. Information itself is well presented and relevant. The CYP Project is taking a thorough approach to promoting equality. The CYP Project team regularly seeks feedback from the organisations it supports. Feedback from events and training has been enthusiastic and positive. Feedback is actively sought and used to inform planning.

The CYP Project is working well with London Councils in delivering to the second-tier support agenda.

Weaknesses

The CYP Project has been less successful, in meeting its stated aims, in helping organisations to improve their systems of data collection and information management. Although, where it has worked with organisations to achieve this, the reported improvements have been of significant distance travelled, it has not reached the number of organisations it set out to support.

Similarly, the CYP Project has not achieved its target number of organisations reporting improved practice and better understanding of equalities issues, this year.

Progress has been slower than the CYP Project anticipated, in its targets, for organisations reporting improved effectiveness in monitoring and impact assessment. However, there are plans set out in the funding agreement, for work in Year 2, that may redress this balance.

In terms of its own monitoring and evaluation, the CYP Project collects a good range of data, such as event feedback forms and statistics from electronic communications. Whilst it is clear that the CYP Project team uses the feedback it gets directly from people to inform its planning, it is not clear how it is using the data it collects from electronic communications, such as website and e-newsletter statistics, to inform its work.

The CYP Project has taken an individualised approach in working with organisations. It could develop in Years 2 to 4 by expanding its record-keeping to demonstrate, better, the impact of its support to individual organisations. It has started this approach by gathering case studies and keeping an organisational support tracking sheet.

Organisations and LVSC officers have talked about the challenge of providing something, in second-tier support, that could simultaneously meet the needs of small organisations and large national organisations. That challenge continues, along with maintaining the CYP Project's momentum. At the "End of Year Get Together", organisations commented on how much they found they had in common. The CYP Project has set good foundations for its work and is well positioned to develop through Years 2 to 4.

Appendix 1 — Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who gave their time to this evaluation.

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Appendix 2 — Telephone interview questions

1. How many children and young people are you working with under the service?
2. How were the events you attended?
3. What did you do as a result of going to the events?
4. What were your reasons for choosing not to go to the events you did not attend?
5. Do you have any suggestions for future good practice forums or training topics?
6. Thinking about your communication with LVSC, have you used the: CYP pages on LVSC website; online CYP forum; e-newsletters; one-to-one contact with CYP Officer?
7. Thinking about the information itself, what has been particularly useful?
8. What are your preferred (or other) ways to communicate between you and LVSC?
9. Do you consider your organisation to be an equalities-led organisation?
10. How easy or difficult do you find it to meet London Councils' equalities monitoring requirements?
11. Did you or a colleague attend London Councils equalities training?
12. How have you used the support service as a network (of organisations working in a specific CYP service area)?
13. What is the best way for you to engage with shaping and developing the support LVSC provides?
14. How have you used LVSC's support to improve how you work with local authorities?
15. Are you involved with the Local Safeguarding Children Boards in the boroughs where you work?
16. How have you used LVSC's support to improve and implement child protection policies?
17. Have you used LVSC's CYP support to make links with other networks?
18. How have you used the support to help you monitor the impact of your work?
19. How have you used the support to improve the quality of your service and to tailor the service to your clients' needs?
20. Name three things that have been really good about the support you have received.
21. Name three things you would like support in over the next three years.

Appendix 3 — Resources

CYP Project documents

Funding Agreement between London Councils and London Voluntary Service Council
CYP Project Monitoring Return — first 6 months

Supported organisations by service area list

Supported organisations and the boroughs in which they operate list

CYP Organisations tracking sheet

Attendance at CYP Events list

London Councils Equalities Training attendance

CYP Launch with Vetting and Barring Session evaluation forms, July 2009

STAN members' feedback to DCSF on Vetting and Barring Session, July 2009

Compiled evaluation forms for NCVYS Sound Systems training, October 2009

Compiled evaluation results for CYP Policy: How London Works, November 2009

Compiled evaluation results for Good Practice Forum: Monitoring and Evaluation,
December 2009

Compiled evaluation results for Good Practice Forum: Working with Schools, January 2010

Compiled evaluation results for Your London Councils Grant Unravelling, March 2010

CYP Project End of Year event notes

Case Study: Roundabout

Case Study: My Voice London

Children & Young People Organisational Development Toolkit (produced by Hackney CVS)

CYP Organisational Development tool-kit (adapted from Hackney CVS tool-kit)

CYP Pages website hits Quarter 3 spreadsheet

E-bulletin statistics spreadsheet

London Child Policy Forum (2010) *United We Stand: A Voluntary and Community Sector
Manifesto for London's Children and Young People* (draft)

Access to: -

- LVSC website and CYP Project's pages
- CYP Project online forum
- CYP Project Twitter stream
- CYP Project e-newsletters

Other references

Harker, A. and Burkeman, S. (2007) *Building Blocks: developing second-tier support for frontline groups*, City Parochial Foundation.

London Voluntary Service Council (2008) *VSF Policy Briefing: London Councils Strategic Monitoring Zones (SMZs)*, LVSC.