

Youth matters

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 4
November 2005

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for

education and skills

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The information you send to us may need to be passed to colleagues within the Department for Education and Skills and/or published in a summary of responses received in response to this consultation. We will assume that you are content for us to do this, and that if you are replying by e-mail, your consent overrides any confidentiality disclaimer that is generated by your organisation's IT system, unless you specifically include a request to the contrary in the main text of your submission to us.

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available on public request, individual consultation responses. This will extend to your comments unless you inform us that you wish them to remain confidential.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact:

Telephone: 0870 000 2288

e-mail: info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794113

e-mail: consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Which of the following best describes you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (under 13)
<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (13-16)	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (17-19)	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (other) Please Specify in the box below
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional working with young people	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer working with young people	<input type="checkbox"/> x Other, please specify in the box below

Please Specify:

Our network is for professionals working with bereaved children and young people.

If you work with young people, which best describes the organisation you work in:

<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Youth Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Connexions Service
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Further or higher education institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Private or voluntary & community sector youth work organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector information and advice organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other voluntary & community sector organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:

Please Specify:

The Childhood Bereavement Network is a multi-professional forum and the national co-ordinating body in the sphere of bereavement care for children and young people.

The CBN is supported by all the major bereavement care providers including Cruse Bereavement Care, Marie Curie Cancer Care, the Child Bereavement Trust, Winston's Wish, ChildLine, Barnardo's and St. Christopher's Hospice and has approximately 280 members across England and the UK; c. 70% are organisations. Most of these organisations operate in the voluntary sector, and have charitable status. All members subscribe to a *CBN Belief Statement* that states, "*all bereaved children and young people have the right to information, guidance and support to enable them to manage the impact of death on their lives*". The CBN is hosted by the National Children's Bureau.

All quotes used in the response below are taken from the CBN's three videos, made with the help of bereaved children, young people and staff from the St Christopher's Candle Project, Jigsaw4u, Penhaligon's Friends, CHUMS Child Bereavement Service for Bedfordshire and the Northampton General Hospital Trust Child Bereavement Service: *A Death in the Lives of..* (2002), *'You'll always remember them, even when you're old'* (2003) and *'It will be ok'* (2004).

General

1 a) What do you think are the most important issues facing young people now?

Comments:

1 b) How are these issues different for younger (13-16) compared to older (17-19) teenagers?

Comments:

2 Are there issues faced by particular groups of teenagers that are not addressed in this document? If so, what are they?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

We would have liked to see mention of bereavement as an experience faced by young people. The majority of young people have been bereaved: 77% 11-16 year olds in one study said that at least one of their close relatives or friends had died. This means that bereavement is a transition which the majority of young people will experience as a normal part of growing up.

However, many bereavements are experienced as particularly significant or disruptive in a young person's life: for example the death of a parent leading to major changes in routine, or a traumatic or violent death leading to conflicting and confusing feelings. This means that, while in reality bereaved young people are not the only ones to have experienced death of someone close, they often feel isolated and overwhelmed. Bereavement and loss can significantly diminish a young person's resilience and affect their emotional and physical health in both the short and long term.

At key transition points in their life, bereaved young people will revisit and reassess the impact of the death. These periods of readjustment - which may occur years after the death or loss - may also affect their physical and mental health, and/or behaviour. Bereaved young people are particularly vulnerable to being bullied and to school exclusion.

The death of a significant member may also have an adverse, traumatically disruptive effect on family dynamics, relationships and functioning.

- *'We're worried about Dad – he doesn't wash, he's always in the pub. I try to wash and iron like Mum. I do a paper round so I've got some money for food.'*
- *'Dad's only like this because Mum died. He cries a lot and then goes to the pub. He only beats me after that.'*

There is increasing evidence that the experience of bereavement – if not properly acknowledged and supported - can lead to negative outcomes for children, young people and their families, and may have an adverse and enduring impact on emotional and physical health. Unfortunately, lack of research and comprehensive statistical data has inhibited informed debate on the issue and the development of effective policy and practice in the field of bereavement care for children

While many parents offer vast reserves of support to their bereaved children, some young people value the opportunity to talk to others about their experiences:

'I still tell my mum everything, we're really close, there's nothing I don't tell her, but I found it helpful to have another set of ears listening and giving me advice.'

3 Do you know of any projects or initiatives which have been outstandingly successful in tackling the challenges covered in this document? If so, please give details.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

The Childhood Bereavement Network is a national, multiprofessional federation of organisations and individuals working with bereaved children and young people. Many of our members have developed innovative approaches to supporting grieving young people. These include

- residential weekends, offered by a number of services including Winston's Wish, Gloucestershire and Nelson's Journey, Norfolk
- web based support including message boards (www.rd4u.org.uk) and interactive areas (www.winstonswish.org.uk)
- peer support in schools, such as that offered by Seasons for Growth

Details of these services and others can be seen at www.ncb.org.uk/cbn/directory

4 a) How can we encourage young people to take their responsibilities seriously?

Comments:

Some young people who appear to be acting irresponsibly in some areas may be shouldering considerable responsibilities in other areas of their lives. Acknowledging this and treating young people with the respect which they are expected to reciprocate can help.

Bereaved young people have talked about their desire to be treated in a respectful way, appropriate to their age and understanding:
'The police, specially in my case they were surprisingly helpful. They came round [after my dad died] and told me all the details about everything that happened and were really open.'

4 b) What should the incentives be for good behaviour?

Comments:

4 c) What sanctions should be applied for poor and disruptive behaviour?

Comments:

4 d) Do you know of any examples of schemes which have applied these kinds of incentives and sanctions effectively?

Comments:

5 What more could be done to divert young people from risk-taking behaviour, like smoking, binge-drinking and volatile substance and illicit drugs misuse?

Comments:

6 What practical benefits and challenges will there be in developing an integrated youth support service?

Comments:

With appropriate resourcing and staff training, an integrated youth support service could mean that young people in need of support – including bereaved young people - are less likely to slip through the net.

A key challenge will be in ensuring the ongoing involvement of the voluntary sector in delivering non-stigmatising, flexible, specialist support. This will require better referral pathways as well as financial support.

7 How can the Connexions brand be used to best effect within the reformed system?

Comments:

8 What more can we do to ensure that reformed services are focused on achieving the improved outcomes we all want to see?

Comments:

Chapter 3

Empowering Young People: Things to do and Places to go

9 a) What do you think of the emphasis in the proposals on empowering young people themselves to shape local services?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Bereaved young people are clear about their desire to be involved in both the planning and the delivery of services:

*'I talked to my buddy about the other things he does here and it made me want to get more involved. He goes to conferences and tells adults all about us and what we need. I want to do that too.'*¹

The Green Paper talks about involving young people in shaping local services, and elsewhere talks about the importance of contributing to society through volunteering. We would have liked to see these two themes linked more explicitly, particularly in the area of peer support and education. Young people can be involved in the delivery as well as the shaping of services to their peers. For bereaved young people, peer support (both from existing friendship networks and from new networks developed with others who have experienced the death of someone close) can be extremely helpful:

'I've met a number of different people [at the bereavement support group] some people my own age and like various ages, and it's been nice to speak with people and know how they've dealt with it.'

'I feel better talking to people that have experienced [bereavement], because people that haven't experienced it don't know what you're going through, and sometimes they're too nice and try too hard to help and they don't know nothing about it. It's just made me feel stronger and not so alone in the world, being part of the group.'

9 b) What options are there for achieving this?

Comments:

¹ Childhood Bereavement Network (2004) *Guidelines on Participation for Childhood Bereavement Services*

10 a) What should be done centrally to support the development and delivery of local opportunity cards?

Comments:

10 b) How should opportunity cards be developed so that the maximum number of young people can benefit?

Comments:

11 a) Which activities do you think have the most benefits for young people?

Comments:

11 b) Do the proposed national standards on activities cover the right areas?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

11 c) Are they achievable and affordable within existing resources?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Chapter 4

Young People as Citizens: Making a Contribution

12 Will our proposals, taken together with those of the Russell Commission, lead to increased mutual respect between young people and others in the community?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

13 What more can we do to recognise and celebrate young people's positive contributions to their communities?

Comments:

14 Would the opportunity to earn rewards motivate young people to get involved in their communities?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

15 How can we ensure that young people from the diverse range of communities that make up today's society are effectively engaged by service providers?

Comments

In terms of bereavement support, cultural and religious sensitivity are vital in making services acceptable and accessible to all. Many CBN members have built successful partnerships with other agencies in the community to improve their delivery of services to diverse communities.

Chapter 5

Supporting Choices: Information, Advice and Guidance

16 What kind of help and support is most important for young people?

Comments:

The Green Paper's main emphasis seems to be on IAG around life choices, particularly education and career choices but also in personal, social and health issues. Yet young people may experience many changes about which they have no choice, such as the death of someone close to them, and the provision of IAG is as vital at these times.

Obviously it is easier to plan for the delivery of IAG which all young people will receive at collective transitions, but it is important that the model of non-stigmatising support is used to support young people at times of personal transition as well.

Although the Green Paper separates out IAG and targeted support for young people, the ethos of preventative, early intervention suggests a continuum of support which would certainly be appropriate for bereaved young people:

1. **the provision of information about death and bereavement to all young people.** Given that bereavement is the majority experience for young people, information and education should be available generally, as young people themselves recognise:
'It's kind of ironic because [death] it's the one thing guaranteed in life and yet they won't teach you about it'
2. **the provision of in-depth information, advice and guidance about**

bereavement to young people facing this experience

Young people and their families have suggested to CBN member Winston's Wish that such IAG should involve

- **Information and education** to understand death and what it means to them
- **Communication** to be encouraged to talk honestly with one another
- **To understand and express their grief**
- **To meet others** and share similar experiences
- **Opportunities to remember** the person who has died

3. **the provision of general information, advice and guidance to bereaved young people** Some bereaved young people may have an increased need for effective IAG in areas such as career and education choices. For example, the death of a parent or other significant adult may mean that a young person has lost the trusted person with whom they were used to discussing these matters, and so the successful delivery of IAG will be particularly significant for them.

17 How can we ensure that information, advice and guidance provided to young people is comprehensive, impartial and challenges rather than perpetuates traditional stereotypes?

Comments:

By involving young people in its planning and delivery.

18 What do you think of our proposals to devolve responsibility for information, advice and guidance to children's trusts, schools and colleges?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

19 a) Do you agree that it is important to have minimum expectations of the information, advice and guidance received by young people?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

19 b) Are the proposed expectations correct for each age group?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

20 a) Do you agree there is a case for quality standards for information, advice and guidance? If so, what should they cover?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

20 b) How can they be made affordable without putting pressure on financial or workforce resources?

Comments:

21 Would quality awards for IAG help to ensure high quality and impartiality?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

22 Do you think a 'personal health MoT' for 12-13 year olds would be an effective way of helping young people make a successful transition to the teenage years and to secondary education?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Chapter 6

All Young People Achieving: Reforming Targeted Support

23 Do you think there is a good case for bringing together within children's trusts responsibility for commissioning different services which provide support to young people with additional needs?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

24 How can we ensure that young people facing particular barriers, for example those who are disabled, are effectively engaged by service providers?

Comments:

Many bereaved young people will receive the support of their families in accessing targeted support. But the young people who may be most in need of services (because they have experienced multiple or traumatic bereavements, or because they do not have supportive networks) may be those who find it hardest to access such support. It is therefore vital that young people are enabled to access support for themselves, as well as via traditional referral routes, and that services reach out into the communities with whom they are working.

25 How can we ensure that the new lead professional role is successful in coordinating the delivery of targeted support to young people who need it?

Comments:

26 What more could be done to help older teenagers make a smooth transition to support from adult services, where they need them?

Comments:

Parents

27 At what stage(s) of their children's lives would parents find it most helpful to receive information about how they can support their teenage children?

Comments:

At times of significant bereavement.

The CBN welcomes the Green Paper's recognition of the importance of providing support to parents at times of transition in their children's lives (evidenced by the proposals for support around transition from primary to secondary school) and would argue that bereavement is a key transition for the majority of young people.

Research has shown that the capacity of a surviving parent to care for a bereaved child is a key determinant of outcomes for that child.

28 a) On which issues would parents of teenagers most like support?

Comments:

Parents of bereaved young people may be overwhelmed by their own grief while trying to support their children, and may value signposting to support for themselves. They may not know about young people's likely reactions to bereavement, and general information about this can be immensely reassuring, as evidenced by parents' calls to the telephone helpline run by CBN member Winston's Wish.

Parents of bereaved young people may also want support around talking with their children, suggestions of helpful activities to remember the person who has died, strategies for encouraging their children back to school, and signposting to specialist support when appropriate.

28 b) How, or through whom should information be delivered?

Comments:

This information is best delivered through a partnership between universal services which the parents may already know and trust, and specialist services which can offer tailored support and also training to staff in universal services.

29 How could schools help parents remain involved with their teenagers' learning and future education opportunities?

Comments:

Other

30 Do you have any other general comments?

Comments:

While proposals for targeted support are generally welcomed by the CBN, we felt that more guidance might be needed about how providers of IAG and the integrated youth support service might work together to deliver a continuum of support .

It is important that support is made available to all young people who could benefit from it, not just those whose behaviour is considered 'disruptive' or 'deviant' enough for intervention to be considered necessary. Many bereaved young people do not talk to anyone about their experience, and those around them may be oblivious to their desire for support:

'No-one at school acknowledged how I was feeling [after my auntie died] and they wasn't as caring as I thought they would be or as they should be.'

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

Code of Practice on Consultation

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 4 November 2005

Consultation responses can be made:

www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations

by email to: youthmatters.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

or in writing to:

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