Youth Service Detached Policy
August 2014

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These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Youth Service Good Practice Guidelines
- Youth Service Curriculum Framework
- Young People’s Information Sharing Flyer
- Youth Service Drugs and Alcohol Pathway
- Pan Sussex Safeguarding Guidelines

The following guidelines are also complemented by the National Youth Agency’s Code of Ethics, which guides and informs the behavior of Brighton & Hove City Council’s Youth Service staff.

**What is detached youth work?**

Detached work is a method of youth work involving establishing relationships with young people where they meet, making contact with young people on the streets, in cafes, clubs, pubs and arcades – anywhere where young people may street-socialise.

Detached work takes its orientation from how young people see and live their lives. What defines detached work projects is the strong element of street work contained in the programme.

Detached work can lead to project work. It is important to recognize this shift in focus, re-labeling the work to avoid confusion. Detached work may also be different from ‘outreach’ work and/or ‘mobile’ youth work. While the fundamental values, skills and competence for effective youth work apply to all methods of youth work, there are special considerations relating to work distinct from youth centre provision or issue-based project work.

Detached youth workers begin the process through contacting groups of young people on the streets and in other locations where they congregate. They rely on their ability to relate to young people ‘on their own terms’, communicating the purpose of the work, generating interest and overcoming initial distrust in a context that is free from the constraints of a building.

Historically, detached youth work has been employed in areas where young people are seen to be particularly at risk or marginalized, and where there is low availability or take up of services and facilities. More frequently it is now used to tackle issues of anti-social behavior, community safety, to defuse inter-gang culture or the problem of ‘youths gathering’. When properly planned, targeted and delivered, detached work can contribute positively to reducing the factors associated with youth crime or social exclusion – although that is not its prime purpose.

Detached (and mobile and outreach) youth work is now seen in many parts of the country to be a key component of mainstream youth provision, complementing the work of youth clubs and projects. Brighton & Hove City Council’s main detached work provision is through the detached youth work team, made up of detached workers and a Mobile Information Bus. However, detached teams operate from other centres and projects as well. Together with colleagues from the voluntary sector; the detached youth work team offers a wide range of skills and expertise in this vitally important area of work.
What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths
- Makes contact with disengaged or ‘hard to reach’ young people
- Identifies and responds to young people not using clubs or projects
- Works in partnership with other agencies, helping young people to access them
- Engages and mobilises young people to become involved in local issues
- Workers are highly visible and known within the local community
- Workers have little or no building responsibilities

Weaknesses
- Young people may not wish to be approached by ‘authority’ workers
- May raise expectations of young people that resources cannot meet
- Workers are isolated or vulnerable when dealing with conflicts between young people
- Detached work can be seen only as troubleshooting ‘hot spots’
- Lack of understanding about detached youth work by other agencies

Preparation

No worker should be sent on the street without receiving a comprehensive line manager-led introduction.

It is vital in developing detached work to understand the area the project intends to cover. This understanding needs to cover demographics, housing, business, and location of area in wider community, employment, education and leisure. This needs a minimum of three months to research, depending on size of area and complexity of community.

Workers need to be clear on the aims and objectives of the work and review the outcomes of any previous work in the area. They must understand the identified targets to be met.

Reconnaissance

Undertake a ‘reconnaissance’ of the area to identify meeting places, features of the neighbourhood, group membership, needs of young people, transport routes, current youth provision, risk assessment. Clear aims and objectives must be established for reconnaissance/observation and reviewed in light of findings. The aims and objectives must be central to the work of the project.
Safety

Detached work should always be undertaken in pairs of workers. As well as the obvious safety points, this has the further advantage of offering choice to contacts, assessing risks, opportunities to debrief and share perspective and alternative analyzing of the sessions programme.

However, there may be circumstances when lone working may be acceptable or preferable, but in this case discussions with your line manager should confirm the agreed arrangements.

The gender and ethnicity of the pairing should be noted.

The safety of workers is paramount; hence workers need to develop a response to potential violent situations, and workers should be aware of escape routes. It is important that you and your colleague are agreed in what course of action you are to take, i.e. using an exit code like ‘shall we go and get some chips?’ Where appropriate it should be discussed with the team and line management. Don’t make assumptions; always know where your colleague is and how to contact them.

Always explain when making contact for the first time who you are and who you work for. In the interest of personal safety, avoid attracting unnecessary attention or sending out the wrong signals.

ID cards and Youth Service clothing

ID cards must be displayed at all times when working; you may also need to use a project ID as well. Do not carry identification which lists your home address or other personal details. Do not carry valuables or items that could make you a target for theft – carry only a small amount of cash for incidental expenses.

Always wear Youth Service t-shirts and hoodies – these are available from Carden Youth Office. Lightweight waterproof jackets with the Youth Service logo on are also available.

Alarms/torches

Personal alarms and a torch should be carried, familiarise yourself with their operation and make sure they are fully charged.
Resources for detached youth workers

Most detached workers carry a ‘kit bag’ or ‘rucksack’ and this is a guide to materials that it should contain:

- Contact card from the project/centre and ID
- Information from other agencies appropriate to targeted group/s.
- Recording sheet and pen
- Personal alarm
- Torch
- Map
- Notebook
- Safer Sex Pack
- Work mobile phone with emergency contact numbers, colleagues and line manager’s contact numbers
- Citizens Handbook Young Person’s Guide to the Law
- Substance misuse screening tools
- Sexual health screening tools

Beginning detached session

Meet at a prearranged point, this may be a street location so workers will need to be prepared with materials if they don’t have access to the project base. Plan the session – weather and unplanned events may necessitate a review. In the event of your co-worker not arriving, wait for fifteen minutes. If the worker has not arrived in that time, phone their contact number. If there is no reply telephone the office/on call manager to inform them that the session has been abandoned. The time lost will need to be discussed with your line manager at the first opportunity and, if possible, used for other purposes or another contact session at a different time.

Phoning in sick procedure

Call office ASAP – 293981. Sue – 07870 169148, Kim – 07812 365994
No later than 12noon for a detached session.

Pass on any info people may need to know, i.e. to cancel appointments with young people. Let office know if you are likely to be off for more than one day. If you cannot get hold of the office or Sue or Kim, call your detached partner direct.

Where possible, team will call around to cover shift to avoid cancelling sessions.

In an emergency, if it hasn’t been possible to notify someone before 12noon then call your shift worker ASAP to let them know you will not be able to make shift.

Keep a record of any missed sessions. On return to work complete ‘Employee self-certification & return to work interview’ form.
Extreme weather policy

Detached – If you are concerned about whether a session should take place due to extreme rain or cold weather, speak to your co-worker half an hour before leaving to meet for the session. Check the weather forecast and make joint decision whether the session should be cancelled. Inform your line manager/on call contact if cancelling a session and to get a final decision if consensus cannot be reached.

Mobile Information Bus – All workers to turn up unless informed by the lead worker (driver) that for safety reasons the session has been cancelled. The lead worker will inform others half an hour before the session is due to start and the line manager/on call contact.

If a session is cancelled for reasons beyond your control those hours should still be logged in your workbook.

Ending a detached session

Allow 30 minutes at the end of the session to debrief and write up the session at a prearranged, appropriate venue, e.g. project base, café, in accordance with council policy (e.g. write up in a pub if there is no alternative but council policy does not allow staff to drink alcohol in working hours). In choosing a location be aware of the confidential nature of the write-up and where young people may also be gathered. If writing up on the mobile bus, the bus should be parked away from young people and workers should ensure the driver is not left in vulnerable situations, i.e. driving away from a contact area alone with young people jumping on the bus etc. Ideally all workers should leave area together. When write up is complete, phone/leave message with your on call worker stating that the session is finished. Only work within times agreed with your line manager and colleagues.

Recording

Allow sufficient administration time to prepare and record your work. Recording is paramount for the development of professional youth work and currently all detached work is recorded on Aspire. Without this we have no method of effectively reviewing planning and monitoring our work. Recordings should be made at the end of every session and they should be kept in a secure private place and be available to members of the team only. Up to 30 minutes at the end of the session should be allowed for this process. Recordings should reflect methods of work, contacts, issues raised, curriculum outcomes, recorded outcomes, accredited outcomes, future work, outlines of interactions and dialogue. No personal details, i.e. name or address are collected or included without the young person’s consent – see the Young People’s Information Sharing flyer.

Workers will need to sensitively record information which may be for the benefit of other workers in the team. The recording will be used for reflection and setting targets for the work. Where possible, read recordings from the previous session prior to going out on the next. Session recording sheets will be kept in a locked drawer by the manager’s desk. Where possible, each worker should take responsibility to input the session recording onto Aspire within 10 working days of the session. Quarterly reports are produced from Aspire and all workers need to ensure that session recordings are inputted onto Aspire by the end of each quarter. Session sheets should be handed to Sue/Kim at team meetings or put into the folder after a session if relevant.
Definition of contact

A recorded level of contact is defined as:

- Workers engaging a young person in dialogue or giving them a project card or contact card information for the first time.
- Repeat contacts with young people involving dialogue, listening assessing needs/wants, planning support/development strategies.
- Workers will make notes of groups/young people observed though these are not counted as contacts. ‘Community’ adults and key people in the development of work programmes are recorded but not counted as contacts.

Advocacy

Workers are encouraged to advocate on behalf of young people but may need guidance/training regarding dealing with potential conflict situations, e.g. with the police. If the police are interacting with young people, do not intervene unless absolutely necessary. If you have concerns about the way young people are being handled or treated, you will be of more use to them in the long term if you have been an objective witness observing and recording the details of what happened.

- Do not raise young people’s expectations by making promises you (or the Youth Service) cannot meet
- Do not collude with young people if their actions or attitudes are clearly negative or harmful to others
- Do not lend young people money or offer them lifts in your car
- Do not use alcohol when working
- Do not give cigarettes to young people
- Do not go into young people’s houses – make sure you know the Home Visiting guidance
- Do not confuse working with young people and your social life

Support and supervision

Regular supervision sessions and team meetings are particularly important to debrief and process the work, which can be very challenging. Workers during the session need to be responsible for responding to unexpected/unplanned events using professional initiative often without the immediate back up of line manager/other colleagues. For example, a street fight involving adults, a car accident, a disclosure or some such event, there will be an on call worker available to discuss any issues/events when appropriate to do so.

Complete your contact sheets, weekly return workbooks, monitoring or recording forms and any other relevant returns required by the service/project after the session.
On call

For each session there will be a senior worker available on call. The on call worker will be available for any emergencies or if workers need to get further guidance on, or debrief if a worker is particularly affected by, anything that occurs during a session. The team should also call the on call contact at the end of each session to let them know that the workers are all safe. The on call worker should have a copy of emergency contact numbers for all workers, if they have not received a call at the end of the session the on call contact should contact the workers direct, in the event that they get no response they should contact emergency contact numbers to ensure staff are safe. In the very unlikely event that workers cannot be located and there are concerns for their safety the on call contact should contact police.

Act within the law

Always act within the law. In order to continue a healthy relationship between young people and worker, a sensitive, honest approach should be adopted at all times. By stating your legal boundaries you are obliged to uphold them, whilst minimizing any suggestion of criticism or the passing of judgment of the young person’s personal habits. This could threaten any present or evolving relationship. Do not encourage or condone the use/misuse of legal or illegal drugs – see Youth Service Drugs and Alcohol Pathway. Do not trespass onto private land when with young people.

You are liable to be in greater contact with young people who are vulnerable and at risk (in the detached work environment) than those colleagues working within a centre. Be aware of legislation affecting highway obstruction, importuning, possession, handling stolen goods, child protection etc. These are potential dilemmas in working towards a positive, trusting relationship with young people who may be on the edges, or involved in criminal activity. However, there is no excuse for acting outside the law.

Knowledge of services for young people

Be aware and ideally become known to others working in your project area. Workers may need to be sensitive in promoting services as this may contradict the young person’s experience or cause the young person to strongly identify you with the service. Help the young people make choices, not make choices for them. Be aware of what services there are for young people, remembering that you are a key referrer and that detached work is part of the spectrum of service provision for young people.
Confidentiality

Respect confidentiality with individuals, between different groups of young people and with colleagues and within the youth work team. Be clear what is meant by confidentiality and the boundaries or exceptions of the confidentiality policy. The Youth Service does not practice absolute confidentiality; below is an example of the two circumstances where the confidentiality policy may be overruled in detached youth work.

- If as youth workers we feel that the action of a young person/s will result in serious harm to themselves or others, we will inform the young person/s of our intentions and the reason for breaking the confidentiality policy. We would explore the options available to them whilst identifying that we do not need their agreement to pursue this disclosure.

- If as youth workers we feel the actions of a young person/s are intent on a serious criminal offence, we would inform the young persons of our intention and the reason for breaking the confidentiality policy. We would explore the options available to them whilst identifying that we do not need their agreement to pursue this.

Safeguarding

If you have any reason, in any situation during your work, to suspect an issue of safeguarding you must report this to your line manager asap.

Further information regarding safeguarding procedures can be found in the Youth Service Good Practice Guidelines and the Pan Sussex Safeguarding Guidelines.

Home visiting

The Brighton & Hove City Council policy on home visiting applies to detached youth workers in the service. An employer’s responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 applies whether the employee is working on or offsite. The main safety risk associated with home visiting is that of violence, although risks may also arise through stress bought on by the isolation or vulnerability of the detached worker. Home visits must always be authorized by the service manager. If possible, workers should be accompanied by someone familiar in home visiting. The following precautions are necessary in order to reduce the risk of violent incidents to staff carrying out home visiting.

Staff should:
- Be fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence
- Be briefed about the area in which they will be working
- Be provided with all relevant information on particular young people and their families, in particular, information about young people with aggressive tendencies, aggressive pets, or who come from families with a history of violence
➢ Be made aware of the need to leave an itinerary with expected departure/arrival times and updating possible changes with a responsible contact who is aware of how to react if the member of staff has not checked in when expected
➢ Have arranged a prior appointment with the parent, guardian, adult, they are going to meet and not to enter the house if either the child is at home alone or if the parent, guardian, adult, with whom the appointment has been made, is not there
➢ Be made aware of the importance of leaving the home immediately if they feel uncomfortable in any way having maintained an escape route
➢ Avoid evening visits wherever possible
➢ Carry a mobile phone
➢ Carry an identity card which should be worn around the neck and show it on the first home visit to a particular home
➢ Not carry large quantities of cash when making home visits

All incidents of violence including verbal abuse threatened or actual violence, harassment both racial and sexual, must be reported to your line manager.

### Allocation of condoms

The Youth Service is part of the Brighton & Hove C-Card distribution scheme, for further information and guidelines please refer to [www.swish.org.uk](http://www.swish.org.uk) – C-card resources section. Workers should attend C-card training as part of their induction. We allocate condoms based on these guidelines, ensuring that young people are Fraser Competent, see below. Where ever possible on detached we should try to ensure that young people are over 13 and provide a discreet environment in which to undertake condom demonstrations, with small groups, always checking out with the young people that they are comfortable to talk in a group.

### Fraser Guidelines

If it is agreed that youth support workers will distribute condoms to young people, including those under 16, then the Fraser Guidelines (1985) should be followed. These guidelines state:

- the young person understands the contraceptive advice which is being given
- the young person cannot be persuaded to inform or seek support from their parents, and will not allow the worker to inform the parents that contraceptive advice is being sought
- the young person is likely to begin or continue having sexual intercourse with or without contraception
- the young person’s physical/mental health are likely to suffer unless they receive contraceptive advice/contraception
- it is in the best interest of the young person to receive contraception without parental advice
Exit strategy

It is important to recognise that a detached work project may end or the workers may move on to another area. The potential implications for young people need to be built into an ‘exit strategy’ as part of the work process. Young people might be offered further opportunities at other times of the year or make choices about other youth provision available to them locally.

Frequently asked questions

Are young people hard to reach?
NO – detached work offers opportunities to reach many young people who don't attend youth clubs or don’t join in mainstream activities. Youth workers need to be sensitive when approaching any individual or group, especially vulnerable young people. Being honest and clear about what we are doing is very important. The overall aim of detached work is to build positive relationships and enhance the skills and confidence of young people.

Is it safe to do detached work?
YES – follow these good practice guidelines and other Youth Service policies and the risks commonly associated with detached work are minimised.

Is it true that detached work is very isolating and stressful for staff?
NO – workers should never be expected to work alone in detached work. Pairs (or threes/fours) can operate successfully in a patch. Staff should have proper identification, phones and alarms. Both before and after a session, proper planning and debriefing as a team will help to reduce any stress.

Is it difficult to approach young people’s space and privacy?
NO – when approaching young people you should always offer them an opportunity to decline talking to you. No worker should approach a situation that looks to be potentially threatening.

Will the local community wonder what I’m doing?
NO – not if you and the service/project have informed the community about the work and that all staff wear appropriate identity badges and have contacted other agencies who work with young people.