

'Understanding and Evidencing the Impact of Youth Advisory Boards'

Breckland Youth Advisory Board 2012-14



The **Benjamin** Foundation

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Introduction

The Breckland Youth Advisory Board was created in March 2012 to develop a commissioning model that enabled young people and key local decision makers to work collaboratively. The Board is made up of adult professionals from a variety of backgrounds including police, health, schools, local councils, voluntary sector and young people. They hold regular meetings to explore –

- **The needs of young people** within the Breckland District aged 11-19yrs. This could be related to any one of the professions listed, for example Health and Sexual Health.
- **Current Delivery**; what is already being offered and is this meeting the needs identified?
- **Value for money and collaboration**; how can organisations commissioned be cost effective or work in collaboration with others to reduce overheads.
- **Quality Assurance**; how projects are delivered, are they meeting the need identified and are they accessible and interesting to the young people using them?
- **Community participation and innovation**; Board members and young people can explore how young people and adults can have more of a say in their communities and be at the heart of change.
- **Prevention**; to discuss projects that can prevent need before it arises such as Anti-Social behaviour and the need for police intervention or teenage pregnancy.



Each Youth Advisory Board is allocated a nationally qualified youth worker who is an advisor and facilitator to the Board, Young Commissioners, provider organisations and the wider community.

To identify needs the Board might want to address, it has been important to conduct research. Breckland YAB has so far surveyed and consulted 500+ young people aged 11-19yrs on topics such as positive activities, sexual health, drugs and alcohol, diversity, bullying, employment and much more. They have also incorporated information from the Norfolk Age and Stage Profiles 2012/3.

The research has informed the commissioning priorities and how the Board has chosen to commission projects in the last two years. To support the adult Board in decision making young people have been recruited and trained as Young Commissioners. There have been 23 young people involved as young commissioners. They have received the following training:

- **Research Training** – This was conducted over a weekend at the Kingswood Activity Centre (Report Available)
- **Interview Training** – Young people attended a one day training event where they devised questions for tender interviews held in October 2013.
- **Diversity Training** – Young people attended a weekend training event at Eaton Vale. Organisations delivered workshops for young people on topics such as disability, ethnicity, drugs and alcohol and School Nurse commissioners.
- **Social Action** – Young people have participated in community volunteering in Breckland delivered by North Breckland Youth For Christ (Social Action Week)



- **Norfolk Youth Award** – Each Young Commissioner can receive a Norfolk Youth Award for 25 **hours contribution** to the YAB. This is made up of three modules – Working with others, Personal Development and Contribution to the Community.



Workshop on Disability and its impact on young people.



Young Commissioners and Board members complete problem solving training.

Research Training at Kingswood 2013.



Impact of Training

“I learnt how it felt to trust someone with my personal information, which has taught me how it may feel for the respondents”

“The different research techniques and how to do an interview”

“How to talk to different groups of people and how to make the community better”

This report will outline how the collaboration of the YAB has enabled greater community engagement and the development/impact of new services for young people.

Impact of New Projects

Between 2012-14 Breckland Youth Advisory Board highlighted 8 priorities they wanted to address;

- Community engagement and capacity building
- Ethnic tension
- Bullying
- Sexual health
- Drugs and alcohol
- Summer holiday activities
- Small Grants Scheme

For each of these priorities a project has been commissioned and is currently being delivered within the Breckland District.

In 2012/13 the priorities were identified after surveying 250 young people and a 'Needs Analysis' Collated. There were various needs identified but limited capacity to meet them. This meant the YAB focused on creating some capacity to deliver youth services in communities. Creating opportunities for community volunteers to have a



direct impact on services locally. To enable progress the Breckland YAB commissioned projects that Trained, Retained and Celebrated volunteering. This was for adults and youth volunteers aged 16+.

Each town in Breckland was included to give an even spread of delivery and provision. After a specification was written there was a tendering process and 7 organisations were commissioned –

Organisation	Area	Outcomes	Number of young people and Adults engaged	Accreditation Achieved and Experience of volunteers
Youth Go Global	Thetford	Provide volunteering opportunities for young people.		
Project Rainbow	Watton	The project trained adult volunteers to work in the local community.	11 Adults	8 volunteers achieved a level 1 in Youth work. Volunteers are currently working towards establishing a new youth provision in Watton.
North Breckland YFC	Dereham	The project supported 100+ youth and adult volunteers to do positive activities such as garden clearing, sign cleaning.	100+ across North Breckland	Young people volunteered in the community cleaning gardens and local community. They will attend SOAK gain this Easter and continue to support local support local services.
SNYA	Attleborough	Volunteers in this project created a new radio station in Attleborough and supported Healthy Towns agenda.	20 Youth Volunteers	National Award Nomination – Volunteers are currently producing a local



				newspaper and radio shows.
ICENI Project	Swaffham	This project recruited new volunteers to develop their open provision and work in the local community.	27 Adult and Youth Volunteers.	5 Level 1 Youth work qualifications Volunteers continue to deliver youth projects at ICENI and now Narborough.
Young Commissioners	Breckland	Young commissioners have been fully involved in all aspects of the commissioning process.	23 Youth Volunteers	10 Norfolk Youth Awards – Young commissioners will now move onto the ASDAN Youth Voice Award, accredited by British Youth Council.

There are a total of 181 adult and youth volunteers supported and involved in delivery as a direct response to the Breckland YAB funding. There has been a variety of volunteering opportunities including active citizenship through the Breckland SOAK (Social Action Week), Young Commissioners participation, Radio commentating and Youth club facilitation. These projects would have difficulty delivering services in their communities without the support of trained volunteers. To initiate these projects also required paid staff to recruit and support the community volunteers, this support was provided by Breckland YAB.

In the last two years 500+ young people have been involved in surveys and consultation informing the Board of young people's needs within Breckland.

Commissioning 2013-14



In 2013/14 the priorities were informed by a stronger youth voice and a need to provide more specific activities that young people could access. Young commissioners received research training and were more equipped to understand the need for research and what it could be used for. Young commissioners looked at the needs in their towns and identified four common priorities. They then developed a questionnaire which was completed across the district. Approximately 300 young people completed the survey that asked questions related to –

- Ethnicity and diversity
- Bullying
- Sexual Health
- Drugs and Alcohol Research

The information was again collated into a Needs Analysis 2013/14. Young people met with adult Board members and looked at what types of projects could meet the needs identified. Specifications were written and outcomes identified by the Breckland YAB. The Board explored these priorities and identified the key outcomes for each, a brief description below shows these and the projects commissioned to address them.

Ethnicity and ~~Diversity~~ – Diversity –

Young people will demonstrate a greater understanding of diversity and develop the ability to share this knowledge with their peers.

Young people will be able to collectively reflect on their personal experiences and those of their peers.

This will create a positive culture of group work and togetherness within their peer group that can then transcend into their future education, employment and communities.'



Culture Works East was commissioned to deliver a project across the Breckland District working with young people aged 14-19yrs. They are currently working with 12 young people from variety of backgrounds using multi media techniques. They will achieve a Silver Arts Award and then deliver workshops to other young people across Breckland in the summer holidays 2014. The anticipated outcome of this work is that young people will then promote diversity and greater understanding of others in their school and home communities.



- Mixed Up Media (Culture Works East , Thetford 2013)

Bullying project outcomes

'Young people will feel happy and safe within their community and learning environment.

They will be able to access and identify appropriate support in times of distress and discuss issues that are impacting on their self esteem and well being.



Young people will be able to collectively reflect on their personal experiences and those of their peers. This will create a positive culture of group work and togetherness within their year group that can then transcend into their future education and employment.'

ICENI Partnership ~~are~~is based in Swaffham and offer delivery points at the ICENI Community Centre and the Hammonds Academy ~~school~~School. The project is being piloted in Swaffham and is working with young people aged 11-16yrs, training them as school mentors who can support their peer group around issues of bullying. There are currently 24 engaged in the project and there will be future publicity created around the harm of bullying. It is anticipated that the impact of this project will be that young people are able to learn feeling safe and confident achieving better academic outcomes.

Sexual Health –

Young people will demonstrate a greater understanding of the impact a sexual relationship can have on self and others both physically and emotionally.

They will ~~Develop~~develop new skills related to communicating within a relationship and how choices are made appropriately.

Mancroft Advice Project is Norwich based organisation ~~whethat~~ has significant expertise in the field of sexual health and young people. Young people identified the need for support around the subject of relationships and understanding the emotional aspects of a sexual relationship. MAP will pilot this project in three geographical areas to assess what impact it can have on choices and how the sessions are developed. They are currently delivering in Wayland Academy to a group of 34 young people (separated in two for delivery). The project is a research pilot that will assess different delivery ~~methods~~The methods. The organisation will then give feedback



of the variety of approaches to inform future commissioning by Breckland YAB and the local Clinical Commissioning Group.

Drugs and Alcohol Research –

‘Young people will be able to identify why and how young people use recreational drugs including tobacco and alcohol. The implications of recreational drug use within the local community; opportunities for a change in behaviour. Young people will be able to collectively reflect on their personal experiences and those of their peers. This will enable young people to make informed choices in relation to their recreational drug use in the future’

Kaizen is a London Based research ~~organisation,organisation~~; they- have been commissioned to conduct research in Watton, Norfolk. They will explore why some young people choose to use drugs and why some young people choose not to. The hope is that future intervention through YAB commissioning will have more focus and enable services to be delivered that address the motivating factors of substance misuse and also the protective ~~factors.Thefactors.The~~ anticipated outcome of this research is that organisations in Watton and surrounding villages will be able to inform a plan and funding application to tackle any priorities raised. Young people felt that there was a number of young people and adults using drugs and alcohol in the Watton area. Kaizen will contact a sample group of 100 young people aged 11-19yrs. This will be in the Watton town and surrounding villages. They will visit various projects and complete detached work. There will then be a report that will be used to inform agencies and organisations delivering in the area and if appropriate across Breckland.

Additional Needs that the Board and Young People identified were –

Summer Holiday Provision –



Holiday provision was identified as a need in relation to anti social behaviour spikes in Attleborough, Thetford and Dereham. Organisations were commissioned to identify and work with groups of young people that could possibly be involved in anti social behaviour over the summer months and target meeting areas to engage young people. There were 5 organisations were commissioned Thetford Community Association, Culture Works East, Dereham Community Support, North Breckland Youth for Christ and Nurture by Nature. They worked with a total of 253 young people across the Breckland District.

Small Grants –

The small grants scheme was identified as a way of enabling young people and community an opportunity to access small amounts of funding that can act as a catalyst for future development. Norfolk Community Foundation will administer the grants on behalf of Breckland YAB. The grants will be available to young people directly and adult grants for the benefit of young people. It is hoped that approximately 100 young people/adults/groups will benefit from small ~~grants, grants;~~ this could be more depending on the amount applied ~~for. The for. The~~ anticipated outcomes from the small grant scheme are that young people will be empowered to identify their learning needs and access equipment/training/~~transport that~~ transport that will enable this to happen.

Impact for Communities, Young Commissioners, Providers.

All the above projects are new to the Breckland District they have been commissioned in direct response to what young people have told us and the information that adult Board members have brought to the table.

The impact of the Breckland Youth Advisory Board and the priorities that have been identified will take time to become apparent. In the first two years of the YAB there has been significant progress in the facilitation and initiation of new youth provision.



This can be evidenced using feedback from community groups and organisations for example –

SNYA – Suffolk and Norfolk Youth Action in Attleborough were commissioned to recruit volunteers to initiate a Radio project based at Attleborough High school. The project recruited youth and adult volunteers and developed a number of radio shows presented by young people and a local newspaper highlighting their work and organisations in the Attleborough area. Feedback from the project stated –

‘With the funding from Breckland YAB we established a Youth Forum as per our application. - That youth forum selected the Healthy Towns initiative as an important issue to them. This transformed into a project that went on to compete in the Money For Life competition. SNYA has learned (Friday 7th March) that our ‘The Student Kitchen’ project has been selected as one of England’s five finalists for this year’s Money for Life Challenge. The project sponsors told us that the quality of the entries had been outstanding and that they really enjoyed finding out about everything we have achieved’

Culture Works East – This project was commissioned to deliver positive activities in the summer holidays 2013 to address ASB and engage young people in positive activities. The project delivered a variety of activities associated with creative media including a video that highlighted the need for a new play area within the Redcastle estate as it is need of repair.



“I had the best summer....it was really fun.”

“I had fun”



“Cool! Creative! Fun”

“Fun and Exciting”

“Due to the environment the young people come from positive activities during the summer months are veryVery limited. Even more so on the limited budgets most of the children’s families have available to them. Therefore having a range of free activities such as delivered by Culture Works was of utmost importance to the area and the young people” (Local Provider Organisation)

71% of the delivery team and project partners agreed that the programme was successful in supporting youngYoung people to reduce anti social behaviour in their local area.

28% neither agreed nor disagreed.

“We had around 40 young people involved in the project which gave them a focus away from potential anti-social behaviour.

Long term, the project had a positive impact on community cohesion, particularly



as a result of the exhibition day, this was attended by local Police, Councillors and parents.

Young Commissioners

The Young Commissioners have been able to develop a variety of skills during their time with the Breckland YAB. The YAB has provided regular training sessions on a variety of topics to enable young people to be involved fully in the YAB process. The skills such as research, interviewing, assessing applications and much more have become transferable and as young people state in the following feedback this has led onto further opportunities in their lives. All young commissioners completed or are completing a Norfolk Youth Award.

‘As a result of joining YAB I am now a volunteer police cadet in Thetford. Being a volunteer police cadet has lead to me gaining experience in an area I wish to go in to the future’

Laura 17 – Thetford

‘I look at discrimination differently and look at minorities more positively. I have a feeling of accomplishment and after attending The Benjamin Foundation away day and speaking in front of 80 people I was invited to the Fosters Ball at Norwich City. This was a great experience’

Keilan 17 – Attleborough.

‘I feel I have become more prompt with my timings more and know what I need to do. I have recently been confident enough to write a letter to a group leader on how a youth group I attend can be improved I would not have done this before’

Katie 16 – Thetford



'Being a young commissioner for the Breckland YAB has made a difference to the way I see the world as it has made me combat stereotypes both in my own thoughts and other peoples. It has made me more confident within groups both with other Young Commissioners and adult Board members. I am now friends with people that I wouldn't have necessarily have been friends with before. This is a good thing'

Kristina 15 – Dereham

'Since I have joined YAB I have learnt and developed new skills. I have met many new people. I have gained skills such as group conversation, interviews and in depth discussions. I have become more confident when it comes to talking to people in groups a long with voicing my opinion in a confident way. I have taken part in new experiences and I have taken myself out of my comfort zone in many ways including staying away from home on a residential. Finally since I have been part of YAB I have also felt good as I have influenced the community by contributing my opinion in order for money to be commissioned to people and progress to influence and maintain their future'

Becca 17 - Attleborough



To ensure the projects were delivering successful provision the Breckland YAB Young Commissioners completed quality assurance visits. This gave them an insight into the organisations they had commissioned and how the YAB can make a local impact.

(Left) Young Commissioners visit Nurture by Nature in Attleborough, summer 2013.



Young commissioners developed and agreed the questions and process for quality insurance creating a QA sub group.

Feedback to groups gave guidance on how the project appealed to young people, if it was a welcoming environment, and suggestions on improvements. Young commissioners continue to develop this piece of the commissioning process.

Added Value

The YAB Model has taken time to translate within communities and disseminate to community organisations. This said there has been some significant value placed on the new model and its ability to transform how funding is allocated. Organisations applying for YAB funding in Breckland have been required to explore the needs of young people in their community and look at SMART ways to deliver activities that meet those needs. Feedback from providers has stated that –

How has YAB influenced your delivery?

'It has helped with connections with a number of other groups. The team have worked on one project with us'
NBVFC

'We have many projects that we are working on/ considering and this has been brought about by the investment made in us by the Breckland YAB'.

SNYA



'I very much appreciate the work of the YAB and hope that the county council will recognise their impact and therefore give them greater opportunities and responsibilities'.

Dereham Community Support

The Breckland Board members have identified how their involvement has enabled them to think differently about the services provided for young people within the district members stated that –

What attracted you to the role of a YAB Board member?

'Youth engagement'

'Close involvement with youths and partner agencies'

As a result of the YAB model what future developments would you like to see with —?

a) The community b) The Board c) Young Young Commissioners

'Would like to see wider awareness and engagement with the community'

'Directing funds to the appropriate resource that will have the most effect. Having been elected last October as Chair, I would like a vice chair with a mirrored youth chair'

'I would like to see a better understanding of the YAB model in the wider community and more involvement between the YAB Board and Young Commissioners'



Has your involvement in the YAB had an impact on your professional role?

'Yes it has as I enjoy seeing young people develop the skills to influence decision making in their area'

'I believe it has enhanced my professional development and made senior management more aware of what I have to offer.'



In addition to the positive feedback from providers and Board members there has been new development within communities. In Dereham a new Youth Hub has been created and Dereham Youth Focus group. This project was not commissioned by Breckland YAB and shows the impact of YAB community support. This has been directly developed in collaboration with the YAB. Young people have participated in two meetings identifying the needs within their local community and explored solutions to address those needs. They have worked with local Police, Princes trust, Mathew Project and Dereham Community Support. Minutes of those meetings are available on request.

In Swaffham a YAB commissioned organisation the ICENI Partnership have started to share their skills and knowledge with a new youth provision in Narborough to try and develop opportunities for young people in the village. Volunteers are now confident to work across the area in a variety of projects.

11 adults and four young commissioners have attended Evidence Led Problem Solving training organised by Breckland YAB in Narborough. Delivered to local parish councillors and community organisations to explore how they provide provision using a needsneeds led approach. Feedback from the course stated –

‘The workshop enlightened us as to the positive attitude and close liaison needed to address the needs of our younger people in the village – it is not just a matter of providing facilities.’

‘The Parish Council, Youth Club and Community Centre Management Committee need to work closely together to identify the needs of the younger people and then produce solutions that are acceptable to the wider (older) members of the village.’

Since attending this event the Narborough community applied to the National Lottery for funding and felt comfortable putting a plan of action together to address needs in their village.

Expenditure for the two years outlines the diversity of provision that has been commissioned and the value for money. Organisations commissioned have relied not only on paid workers for delivery but also a number of volunteers. The YAB has looked carefully at how money is allocated and in 2014/15 will seek further funds outside of those allocated by Norfolk County Council. The added value of YAB funding has been to encourage community members to volunteer their time for the benefit of the community. The Breckland YAB has had significant impact in enabling this to happen,happen; commissioning organisations that can support this opportunity.



Finance –

Year	Priorities	Expenditure	Organisation Delivering Service
April 2012/13	Volunteer Recruitment	£7,000	Project Rainbow – Watton
	Volunteer Training	£9,405.00	ICENI Partnership- Swaffham
	Volunteer Collaboration	£4,100.00	North Breckland Youth for Christ
	Volunteer Celebration and Retention	£9,814	SNYA – Attleborough
		£7,000	Keystone Trust – Thetford



	Young commissioners Research Training	£5,000 £3000.00 – Innovation Zone. (External Funding)	Youth Go Global – Thetford The Benjamin Foundation Breckland
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Year	Priorities	Expenditure	Organisation Delivering Service
July 2013	Summer holiday positive activities Address ASB in Dereham, Thetford and Attleborough	£20,000.000	Forest School Dereham Community Support YFC North Breckland Culture works East Thetford Community Support
August 2013	Young Commissioners Diversity Training	£3,000	Eaton Vale Activity Centre
October 2013	Bullying and inappropriate behaviour	£13,048.00	ICENI Partnership



October 2013	Research into Motivating factors related to substance misuse including alcohol	£12,000.00	Kaizen
October 2013	Diversity	£25,000.00	Culture Works Foundation
October 2013	Sexual Health and positive relationships	£15,000.00	MAP – Mancroft Advice Project
February 2014	Positive Activities for Targeted young people	£12,500 (Additional Funding)	The Benjamin Foundation
April 2014	Small Grants scheme – to provide training opportunities within the Breckland District for adult/youth volunteers and groups	£20,000	Norfolk Community Foundation



August 2014	Young Commissioners International Youth Exchange	£5,000	The Benjamin Foundation
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Conclusion

In the two years that the Breckland YAB has been commissioning services there have been 14 organisations commissioned. They have worked with 391 young people to date with this is set to rise as recently commissioned projects start to have greater impact. There have been 500+ young people consulted on what they think the needs for young people in Breckland are. The success of the YAB has been to change the culture of participation for young people and adult professionals when exploring the need for services and what those services should be. The development in strategic thinking has enabled adult professionals to think more consciously about how they can involve young people in decision making and community groups are becoming more connected to look at common causes. As a professional Youth Worker for 15 years I can see how this framework is invaluable in empowering communities and young people. It has the ability to give all participants responsibility for the services in their communities and the outcomes they would like to see for young people transitioning to adulthood. To develop the YAB in Breckland further a focus on the individual towns and villages would enable specific Youth Offers that are even more linked to the communitiescommunity's young people reside in. This will be a development strategy for 2014/15 with a link to external funding that can support the YAB funding.



To finish this document I would like to quote a young person who has benefited from a Breckland YAB project commissioned in Swaffham –

'Looking back and thinking at the time we both ~~was'nt~~wasn't working and thinking how far we have both come to sorting ourselves out with a nice job and being able to do the things we want to do. I'd like to thank everybody for ~~thier~~their support in everything in helping me to achieve the goals I set myself. Big thank you to my family and friends and Sally Palmer at Byc ICENI for sorting me out with voluntary work at the community centre and helping me find my inner confidence to get out there and reach my ultimate goals. I've always struggled in crowded environments due to my anxiety and if it ~~was'nt~~wasn't for Sally helping me I don't think I'd of had the confidence to get out in the big world.Anybody who is struggling for work I know it sounds rubbish doing unpaid work but I believe that volunteering is a great thing to do it gives you experience, allows you to make your cv really good, I fully recommend it if it ~~was'nt~~wasn't for me volunteering and doing work experience I ~~would'nt~~wouldn't be where I am now.'

Youth Volunteer ICENI Swaffham.

