# What do you need to do if you are thinking about setting up a youth club?

## Congratulations!

You have made a big step in wanting to support your community. Setting up a youth project can be a daunting experience as you need to ensure that activities are safe and fun, that offer positive experiences. There are lots of things you need to consider before going ahead.

This guide will help you navigate through what you need to do and why; and will illustrate the minimum requirements you need to have in place before opening your doors.

Please also use this guide to conduct annual reviews so any changes can be incorporated and to help you identify where gaps may be.

# Identifying a Need - consultation with young people and the community

## Summary

There are a number of reasons why you might want to set up a youth club, these include:

- Young people in your community have asked for one.
- You want to support the children in your community.
- You have children yourself and can see that young people need something to do.
- You want to deal with what can be perceived as bad behaviour from young people.

Whatever your reason, you need to make sure that you are well-informed before going ahead and that there really is a need for a local youth club/project in your area.

*"You need to consult with young people before opening a youth club because young people want to feel that they are being listened to and that they can contribute their ideas. That way you can find out what they actually want, rather than what you think they want, and more young people will come along."*

Bobbie, 14

## Useful links

- You are already on the Momentum (Norfolk) website, there is lots of support, training and help you can access through this organisation.
- Contact Momentum for information on the Ambition 'First Steps Framework' that can help you get started and identify improvement areas.

## Principles

- A good youth club/project meets an identified need. Without adequate research you may set up something that is either not used or duplicates something that's already happening in the community.
- Talking to young people and other members of the community is essential to ensure the project fits with the community needs.
- Good youth provision has links and access to other services that can support the delivery and outcomes for young people.

## Things to do/consider

- Find out what is already happening in your area and how well attended the provision is? If it is well attended - do you need another group? If it is not well attended - what are the reasons for this?
- Find out by talking to young people. Ask them whether they want a group, and if they do what should it look like? Remember be careful about approaching young people hanging at local haunts, we have taught them to be wary of strangers and you should consider what it might look like if you approach young people on the street. Use existing mechanisms such as schools, or local Facebook pages to ascertain interest.
- Find out what other members of the community think. Are there possible objections, are there people who might want to help, is there local expertise in any of the areas that you need to consider?
- Talk to local services and organisations and see how you can get their support and what that might look like.
- What are you prepared for? Do you expect it to be a safe place for young people to come and do activities, or will it be somewhere where young people can come and talk about all their worries and concerns, or both?
- What age are you aiming the group at? Youth provision is classed as between 11 and 18 years old but an 11 year old has very different needs to an 18 year old.

# Logistics - venue, storage, time, accessibility

## Summary

Once you have established the need, you need to consider if there is a suitable and safe place from which to deliver. Young people have very good reasons for needing this.

**"It's important to think about the venue and time of the youth club so it's accessible to everyone. It needs to be consistent so young people don't need to worry about changes."**

Neve, 15

**"I would like it to be accessible for me to get into the building and to get the support I need."**

**"I like it when it's welcoming."**

## Principles

- You are looking for a public building e.g. community centre or school. The venue should never ever be a private home.
- The venue should be easy to get to and accessible; in other words, it should be easy for all young people, including those with disabilities, to get inside the building.
- The venue should have enough space to do more than one activity safely.
- The availability needs to be at a regular time each week for a reasonable amount of time: do not take a venue because it is cheap if the only time you can have it is Monday evening 9-11pm.

## Things to do/consider

- How will young people get there - are there safe routes to and from the venue? Is there enough room for parents/carers to drop their children off safely? What about public transport, is there a need for young people to use it?
- Is it welcoming to all young people - can disabled young people use the building with ease? How intimidating is the inside decor? Are the fixtures and fittings robust enough to cope with the use?
- What space do you have - is there room for quieter activities? Is there an outdoor area you can use when the weather is nicer? How easy is the space to supervise and manage?
- How is the venue governed - is there a supportive committee overseeing the venue? How easy is it to deal with the management?
- Who else will be using the building at the same time - will it be easy to keep the groups separate? Could either the young people or the other group cause each other distress in any way?
- What time do you have for the booking - is it convenient for volunteers and young people? Does it clash with any other commitments young people might have, for instance a homework club at their school?

## Useful links

- Community Action Norfolk has a large database of existing community groups and the venues they use. They may be able to help with ideas of venues but also which venues may be suitable for your group. www.communityactionnorfolk.org.uk
- Equal Lives offer a range of support and consultancy services, including help with policies and an audit of premises; there is a charge for this service. www.equallives.org.uk

## Resources

- A VIPER Guide to Participation in Decision-Making – http://www.allfie.org.uk/docs/Viper%20Guide%20Hear%20Us%20Out.pdf has some good tips about making your club accessible to disabled young people, and Participation Works - http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources/how-to-support-disabled-and-non-disabled-children-and-young-people-to-work-together-in-inc/ has some guidance for helping disabled and non-disabled young people work together inclusively.