

# *myplace*

## Summary Report



Today I got some support about my family.

Today I just chilled in the youth room, I love it. we played monopoly all day.

Today I spent all day in the youth room... Dance mats- that's how we like it.

# ***myplace Evaluation***

## **Summary Report**

***Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)***

*Nadia Bashir, Elaine Batty, Chris Dayson,  
Sarah Pearson, Elizabeth Sanderson, Ian Wilson*

***Centre for Education and Inclusion Research (CEIR)***

*Lucy Clague, Eleanor Formby,  
Claire Wolstenholme*

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The findings and recommendations expressed in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily represent those of the Big Lottery Fund or the Department for Education.

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<sup>1</sup> Steering group members were Richard White, Department for Education (Chair); Mandy Barnett, MB Associates; Fazia Chaudry, The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services; Sarah Cheshire, Big Lottery Fund; Tim Crabbe, Substance; Jon Eastwood, Big Lottery Fund; Kiran Egan, Department for Education; Nigel Godfrey, University of East London; Bethia McNeil, Young Foundation; Gareth Morrell, NatCen; Sarah Nash, Big Lottery Fund; Shelagh O'Connor, New Horizon Youth Centre; Steven Pryse, The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services; Laverne Sampson, Big Lottery Fund; Alex Strutz, The National Youth Agency.

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## Introduction

The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) and the Centre for Education and Inclusion Research (CEIR), both at Sheffield Hallam University, have carried out an evaluation of the **myplace** programme on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) and the Department for Education (DfE).

The **myplace** programme has provided capital funds for the development of new and improved youth centres. Projects have been developed in partnership across the public and voluntary and community sectors (and in minority of cases also with private sector investors) working with young people to develop centres which aim to meet the needs of young people in a financially sustainable way. Grants range between £1 million and £5 million and the first awards were made in 2008. By the time central Government funding for the programme comes to an end in March 2013, approximately £240 million of **myplace** funding will have been awarded to 63 projects across England. At the time of reporting 53 centres are open to young people.

The programme has four outcomes:

- more young people, parents and communities feeling that they have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of activities
- more young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development
- more young people having access to information, advice and guidance services from within places they feel comfortable
- stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with, and for, young people.

## Context

**myplace** is a product of the policy priorities of a previous administration and recent changes in the political and fiscal climate have affected the development and implementation of the programme. Youth services are in a period of transition, in which there is service reorganisation driven by the current Government's Positive for Youth priorities but also by cuts in public sector budgets. The centres are opening in a time of overall reductions in the funding of youth services, and of open access provision in particular, and this creates particular challenges in relation to generating revenue income.

There is a lack of recent reliable evidence on the impact of youth centres. Current evidence suggests that participation in positive activities is linked to a range of positive outcomes but much of the evidence fails to link these outcomes to specific interventions.

## The Evaluation

The evaluation was carried out between November 2011 and March 2013 and has addressed three main questions:

- what are **myplace** centres and other youth centres/ facilities in which capital funding has been invested achieving and what is best practice in measuring impact?
- what are the on-going costs of provision and how should this inform future investment decisions by local authorities and others considering establishing youth centres

- how are **myplace** centres and other youth centres/facilities in which capital funding has been invested generating income and what are the lessons for revenue planning in the future by local authorities and others considering investment in youth centres/ facilities?

The evaluation has adopted a mixed-methods approach, including interviews with Big Lottery Fund staff and analysis of programme data held by BIG; two surveys of **myplace** centres, conducted in March and December 2012; longitudinal surveys of young people attending **myplace** provision and a sample of young people living in areas that have not had **myplace** investment - carried out in two waves over the periods March to July 2012 and December 2012 to January 2013; case studies of ten **myplace** centres each involving interviews with staff, volunteers, trustees, funders and partner agency representatives as well as interviews and focus groups with young people, and collection of diary and photographic evidence; and focus groups with young people not attending **myplace** centres.

## Findings

Findings are presented under the three main research questions.

**What are myplace centres and other youth centres/facilities in which capital funding has been invested achieving and what is best practice in measuring impact?**

**The buildings developed under the *myplace* capital programme are universally well received and facilities are generally of higher quality than those available to young people elsewhere**

The centres are an important symbol of commitment to youth provision at a time when there is widespread disinvestment in youth services. Young people participating in interviews and focus groups for this evaluation consistently praised the quality of facilities, often remarking surprise that they were 'allowed' to use them. Staff and partner agency representatives suggest that the buildings provide good environments in which to engage young people.

Young people were involved extensively in project planning and development and this has ensured that buildings are appealing to young people. There was widespread consultation at the planning stages, often involving surveys of large numbers of young people, which identified the need for new facilities for young people. Small groups of young people typically worked with architects to influence all aspects of centre design and fittings, ensuring that elements which are important to young people, such as space to relax and socialise, were included in the centres.

Applicants were encouraged by the Big Lottery Fund to consider the sustainability of centres from the outset but in some cases the desire to respond to the priorities of young people has taken precedence over other considerations such as functionality or the need to use the buildings for commercial activities which generate income. It is important that these competing priorities are given equal consideration at the outset of any future capital programmes.

***myplace* centres are delivering a range of activities which are valued by young people, and which have attracted large numbers of young people, many of whom have not previously attended youth centres**

Investment in high quality youth facilities and activities attracts more young people to provision and they attend more often. It is estimated that at the time of reporting somewhere between 14,716 and 26,000 young people each week are attending the 53 centres that are open. Eighty one per cent of the young people surveyed at **myplace** centres had not been to a youth centre offering structured activities before attending **myplace** and between 85 per

cent (at baseline) and 86 per cent (at follow-up) of those in the **myplace** sample attended at least once or twice a week, compared to 55 per cent (baseline) and 57 per cent (follow-up) of those in the comparator group.

Young people particularly value flexibility in activities: the ability for young people to drop in and out of activities was an important factor in centres which had been successful in attracting high numbers of young people, and over-programming of activities was a criticism raised by young people who did not attend **myplace** provision, or who went infrequently. The ability to respond quickly and positively to young people's suggestions for new, or different, activities (within the constraints of the buildings) was also a factor of successful provision.

Young people are prepared to travel to access high quality youth provision. Forty two per cent of young people in the **myplace** baseline sample travelled for more than 20 minutes walking distance to get to the centre, compared to 28 per cent of those in the comparator group. Access to cheap public transport and safe routes of passage are important in assisting young people to get to provision; some centres had been able to negotiate reduced rates on local public transport networks, and another had co-ordinated volunteers to give lifts to young people on darker winter nights.

### **Centres offer information, advice and guidance services but these are not accessed by the majority of young people attending **myplace** centres**

There is substantial variation across the **myplace** programme in the approach to structured information, advice and guidance (IAG) services. Case studies have included examples of centres where a range of services are co-located within **myplace** centres to provide a one-stop shop facility. There are also centres where there are no formal IAG services on-site. The majority of providers reported at the baseline survey stage that they provide a range of services including careers advice/ mentoring (91 per cent), vocational training (90 per cent), health services (90 per cent), alternative education (70 per cent), further education (61 per cent), counselling (58 per cent) and financial advice (51 per cent). However the interim report also highlighted the withdrawal or reduction of services from some centres in the context of reductions in public sector funding.

Detail on the use of services was gathered through the follow-up centre survey which identified the numbers of young people accessing these services on a weekly basis. This suggests that between two and eight per cent of the young people attending **myplace** provision are accessing IAG services on a formal basis, although the numbers receiving informal advice and guidance from youth workers may well be substantially higher.

This has important implications for assessing the impact of the programme. The evaluation has highlighted examples of individuals whose lives have been changed substantially by their engagement with youth provision, and it is likely that there are many more young people with life changing stories to tell and who will include some of the most disadvantaged young people such as those with disabilities or young people experiencing homelessness (**myplace** includes provision for both of these groups). The relatively low numbers of young people (as a proportion of overall attendees) accessing formal support such as IAG means that there are currently not enough of them to impact on outcomes at the programme level. However, the numbers of young people accessing services are likely to increase as the numbers of young people attending the centres continues to rise.

### **Young people would like to be more involved in decisions about their youth centres**

There was extensive involvement of young people in the planning and development stages of the **myplace** programme and the majority of **myplace** providers responding to the baseline centre survey reported that they involved young people in decision making across all aspects of the centres. However, only 38 per cent of young people participating in the

**myplace** follow-up survey said that they had been involved in decisions about their centre and 66 per cent said that they would like to be more involved in decisions that affect how their centre looks or works.

Strategies which engage young people in a range of ways, including informal discussions, and formal structures such as boards and management groups, are successful in ensuring that young people have influence on decision making. Where young people had been involved in decisions they were confident that their opinions had been taken seriously: 91 per cent of those who had been involved in decision making at **myplace** centres reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that their views or opinions about how their centres looks or works have been taken seriously.

### **myplace is associated with a range of positive outcomes for young people, and in two areas the evaluation has been able to identify a positive programme impact: exercise and enjoyment of school**

Statistically significant difference in outcome change between young people in the **myplace** and comparator samples is the best available measure of the impact of the programme. There was a statistically significant<sup>2</sup> change of 7.5 percentage points between the **myplace** and comparator samples on the proportion of young people reporting that their enjoyment of school had increased, indicating that the **myplace** programme has had a positive impact on this outcome.

The numbers of young people in the **myplace** sample reporting that they exercised at least once a week stayed constant between the baseline and follow-up surveys in the **myplace** sample, whereas numbers fell between the two waves in the comparator sample. There was a statistically significant change of 6.3 percentage points between the two samples, indicating that the **myplace** programme has also had a positive impact on this outcome.

These differences were greater for some sub-groups within the **myplace** sample indicating that these groups have experienced greater levels of improvement. On the enjoyment of school measure the differences were greater for young people involved in decision making (compared to the comparator sample), males (compared to males in the comparator sample), young people attending centres that are predominantly open access (compared to those attending centres with a higher proportion of targeted provision), and young people attending larger centres (more than 500 attendees per week) (when compared to smaller centres). There was a particularly large difference in the change between young people in the **myplace** sample who identified themselves as having a disability when compared to those without a disability but the low number of disabled respondents in the sample (18) means that this finding needs to be treated with caution.

On the exercise measure young people who attended predominantly open access centres (compared to those with more targeted provision) and young people who attended centres with more than 500 attendees per week experienced greater change. There was also a moderate difference in change between young people with a disability when compared to those without a disability, but again the small numbers in the sample mean that this finding needs to be treated with caution.

There are explanations for the positive impact of the programme on these outcomes. For enjoyment of school, there is an emphasis in supporting young people's engagement with school and learning through alternative curriculum provision, and supporting those young people disengaged or excluded from mainstream school. This focus has contributed to lower

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<sup>2</sup> 95 per cent confidence levels were applied. The McNemar test was applied to identify statistically significant change between baseline and follow-up questionnaires within the **myplace** and comparator samples. The statistical significance of the difference in change between the **myplace** and comparator samples was estimated using the z-test for proportions.



scores for the **myplace** group at the baseline stage and greater opportunity for positive change. For exercise, the provision of high quality sport, leisure and recreation opportunities is a key objective of many centres and it seems logical that young people attending these centres would use these opportunities to exercise more regularly.

There were a range of other positive outcomes for young people attending **myplace** provision including less engagement in anti-social behaviour, and improved attitudes to the local community and peer relationships but the differences between the **myplace** and comparator samples in changes in these outcomes were not large enough to be statistically significant and so cannot be attributed to the programme.

Young people also reported a range of benefits from attending a centre. They identified benefits associated with their attitudes to education and learning and frequency of exercise, but also suggested that attending a **myplace** centre had improved the way they felt about their communities, relationships with their peers, their confidence about the future and their overall life satisfaction.

**The evaluation has not been able to identify impact in relation to aspirations and confidence and well-being; this is because young people scored highly on these measures at the baseline stage and so capacity for change is low**

Questions used in this evaluation to assess outcome change in relation to aspirations and confidence are based on the assumption of 'deficit' – i.e. that young people attending youth centres may be lacking in aspiration or confidence and score lower than other young people on these measures. It is also assumed that the benefits associated with attending youth centres will result in improvements in these measures. This has not proved to be the case in this evaluation. Young people in the **myplace** sample scored highly on these measures at the baseline stage, and for some indicators in these themes young people in the **myplace** sample had higher scores at the baseline stage than those in the comparator sample. Thus the likelihood of centres delivering improvements in these outcomes is low.

There are a number of potential interpretations to this finding: it may be that young people in the **myplace** sample have already benefited from attending the centres and thus have higher levels of confidence and aspiration, or it may be that open access youth centres are more likely to attract young people who have high levels of aspiration, confidence and well-being, or that the young people who participated in the survey were more likely to have these attributes.

There are additional issues associated with the measures used to assess outcome change in the well-being theme (which include the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale). Although these are reliable and tested measures of well-being they appear not to have translated well in the context of this evaluation. Key issues include the different contexts in which the surveys have been administered in the **myplace** and comparator areas, and the fact that outcomes have only been measured at two points in time, and with a short interval between survey waves.

**There is insufficient evidence on the impact measurement practices of youth centres but it appears that practice is limited, and there is a need for capacity building in this area**

Some centres, particularly those engaging with very disadvantaged groups such as homeless young people, use tools such as Outcome Stars to measure the distance travelled of their clients. Other centres have used Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodologies to demonstrate the impact of their work. However, despite the plethora of tools available to centres, it seems that most are not undertaking impact assessment work. Barriers include capacity and confidence, and there is a need to share best practice in this area.

**What are the on-going costs of provision and how should this inform future investment decisions by local authorities and others considering establishing youth centres**

**Operating costs appear high and current values low, but the programme was not designed for economy and the assessment has been carried out at a very early stage**

The average *myplace* capital grant was £3.757 million, ranging from £1.189 million to £5.000 million. For every £1 of *myplace* funding an additional £0.24 came from other sources, with an average of additional funding at £0.916 million per centre<sup>3</sup>.

Table 1 outlines income and operating costs<sup>4</sup> for *myplace* centres.

**Table 1: *myplace* centre income (2011/12) and operating costs (2012/13)**

	Average (mean)	Maximum	Minimum
Income (2011/12)	£451,176	£1,094,738	£28,410
Operating costs (2012/13)	£520,227	£1,453,326	£32,000

Source: *myplace* provider survey (December 2012)

Base: 22 (income); 28 (operating costs)

The current assessment of operating costs suggest that the annual cost per young person attending *myplace* provision is £1,340, with upper and lower estimates of £1,880 and £1,040 respectively. It should also be noted that this is the cost per individual young person, not per attendance, or per hour. Accurate data on the frequency or duration of attendance amongst young people attending *myplace* centres is not available. However, amongst respondents to the *myplace* baseline young people's survey, 85 per cent attended at least once a week.

Net additional impact has been identified in relation to two outcomes:

- enjoying/ have enjoyed school or college
- engaging in exercise at least once a week.

Based on estimates of the numbers of young people attending *myplace* provision (for 40 open centres) this equates to an additional 1,170 young people enjoying school or college, and an additional 990 young people engaging in exercise at least once a week, over the six months for which outcome change has been assessed.

The monetised value of the net additional impact is between £305,500 and £729,400. This comprises

- monetised net present values for enjoying school or college: based on assumptions that one per cent and ten per cent of young people who now enjoy school or college will go on to achieve higher attainment (giving values of £15,000 and £149,600 respectively)
- present value for the 990 additional young people engaging in exercise at least once a week: £257,600 (based on annualised unit value of £270, derived from the cost of a weekly exercise class)

<sup>3</sup> Correct up to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2013

<sup>4</sup> Operating costs are defined as the costs of running and maintaining the buildings and facilities, and the delivery of activities and services.

- cost savings to the NHS of £32,900 associated with a prevention of one per cent of young people taking weekly exercise becoming obese; if 10 per cent of young people taking weekly exercise were prevented from becoming obese this increases to £322,100.

This estimate of costs and values has been carried out very early in the programme. Many centres are newly open and it can be anticipated that if the numbers of young people accessing provision continue to rise, unit costs will fall. It may also be that additional outcomes are observed over time, and as such the assessment of values is conservative.

These findings need to be taken in the context of the programme's objectives. The ambition to provide 'world class' youth facilities has produced large, high quality buildings with facilities which are unparalleled elsewhere in their localities. The emphasis too on engaging young people in the design of centres may have contributed increased costs at the start-up stage. The investments have contributed to improved facilities, and have encouraged more young people to attend youth centres more often. There is also some evidence that the high quality specifications are important in attracting investors, and leverage ratios may also improve if centres develop strategies for building new revenue streams.

### **Investing in high quality centres means that more young people benefit from increased opportunities to access positive activities**

This suggests that in the context of meeting Positive for Youth priorities, which include supporting young people to be healthy, achieve in education, and have access to personal and social development opportunities, investment in high quality open access provision offers the potential to provide these opportunities to much larger numbers of young people than is currently the case.

There are potential opportunities for increased economy in new capital projects. In some cases building running costs have been much higher than anticipated and ensuring that buildings afford flexibility, and that fixtures and fittings are selected for their cost and ability to withstand the wear and tear associated with everyday use, as well as for their appeal to young people, should be considered in any new projects.

**How are *myplace* centres and other youth centres/facilities in which capital funding has been invested generating income and what are the lessons for revenue planning in the future by local authorities and others considering investment in youth centres/facilities?**

### **Strategies for income generation are context specific and depend on the nature of youth centres, what else is available locally, and the priorities of the public and business sectors**

*myplace* centres are pursuing a range of income generation strategies. The evaluation has identified four funding models which are used by centres to generate income:

- ***charging people to use the centre***, including charging young people to use the facilities available and charging the general public (including businesses) to hire space and use facilities
- ***local authority funding*** - a minority of centres are embedded in statutory budgets and receive most of the income they need from the local authority
- ***reliant on non-commercial income***, which includes generating income from public sector grants and contracts, and grants from charitable trusts and foundations; and

- **sponsorship from business**, a minority of centres have been able to attract major investment from business to supplement other income sources.

### **Centres which are reliant on public sector and non-commercial income are most vulnerable financially in the long term**

Analysis of financial sustainability by type of funding model suggests that survey respondents in those centres which rely on local authority and non-commercial income are less likely to report that they have secured sufficient income to cover their operating costs for two years or more, and less likely to be confident in their ability to generate sufficient income in the next five years. In contrast, respondents in centres which have more control over their income sources - i.e. those that generate substantial proportions of income from charging for services or business sponsorship - are more likely to report confidence in their financial sustainability. Examples include the four **myplace** centres developed by Onside, which have generated up to 50 per cent of their income through business sponsorship, and the OPEN centre in Norwich which has developed commercial activities including conferencing facilities; secure storage space and a venue for live music performance.

This suggests that local authorities and others investing in youth facilities need to consider the potential for commercial activity and private sector investment. Evidence suggests that there is scope for charging people to access activities and facilities, although subsidies remain vital to attracting young people and income from charges to young people makes up only a small proportion of total income in centres. Similarly, there is scope for letting out rooms and facilities, or for using centres to host events, although the nature of these will depend on local circumstances and the opportunities afforded by the buildings. The evaluation did not uncover any evidence to suggest that commercial activities acted as a barrier to youth engagement, although there were tensions sometimes when young people did not understand why they could not access buildings at certain times. Involving young people in discussions around commercial activities offers a way to address these tensions. But clearly the balance between meeting the needs of young people and commercial activity needs to be maintained, and centres which fall at either end of the spectrum may either be unsustainable financially or will not be acting as youth centres in the generally understood sense.

A small number of centres in the **myplace** programme have been successful in attracting substantial investment from business, and the lessons learnt from these centres have been applied to the development of capital provision elsewhere in non-**myplace** local authority districts. Lessons include engaging investors early, having a local business champion, and using public sector investment to lever in additional monies.

### **Centres are reliant on local authority funding**

Centres are unlikely to be sustainable without long term financial commitment from local authorities. This message emerges strongly from the case studies and is reinforced by responses to the provider survey. In 2011-12 almost two fifths of the centres were dependent on the local authority for at least 40 per cent of their income, with an average contribution from local authorities of 48 per cent of overall income. It is unlikely that centres will be able to replace this income entirely with other funding sources and the long term sustainability of youth centres is therefore linked to local public sector funding priorities.

## Recommendations

### Delivering provision

- Open access provision offers the potential to deliver targeted support to young people, and providers and commissioners need to consider the balance in youth centres between social activities, which attract young people to provision, and access to services, which may help young people to achieve improved outcomes.

At the Culture Fusion centre in Bradford, delivering services in an environment in which young people are comfortable and in which there is a wide range of activities has been important in improving access to mental health services for young people.
- Centres need to develop marketing strategies which promote their activities to young people and provide opportunities for them to engage informally in activities and events. These might include engagement with local schools and other youth centres (for instance, offering open days or taster sessions), use of social media to promote and review activities; and involving young people in promotion events and activities. The Parkfield centre in Torbay has involved young people in promoting the centre through schools.
- Centres need to be able to respond flexibly to the priorities of young people. This will sometimes mean changing activities, or varying opening hours according to the needs of young people. The Blackburn Youth Zone offers up to 25 different activities at each of its open sessions, allowing young people to choose which activities they are involved in, and to maintain interest by participating in a range of different pursuits.
- Centres need to have in place a range of skills which include not only working with young people, but also skills in partnership working, enterprise activity and facilities management. It is inappropriate for youth workers to take on all of these tasks and the scale of *myplace* provision demands that specialist skills and resources be in place.
- Centres need to review their strategies for involving young people in decision making, with a view towards sustained and meaningful engagement of young people in decision making across all aspects of provision, including potential commercial activity. Examples of youth-led centres include those which offer a range of opportunities for young people to be involved and supported in decision making through informal discussions as well as formal representation on management groups and boards.

At the Parkfield centre in Torbay, young people have been given training to help them undertake their role as Youth Management Board members and young people are involved in discussions about when the centre is open for young people, and when it is used for other activities which generate revenue income.

The Pegasus Theatre Trust in Oxford has a members committee which is open to all young people involved in activities at the centre. Young people involved in the committee are involved in staff recruitment, marketing of the centre, planning and programming of activities and shows, and produce an annual magazine. There are two seats for young people on the Board of Trustees (with full voting rights) and an adult Trustee has responsibility for young people's governance.

- Young people report that the relationships they develop with adults at **myplace** centres are important in creating positive and welcoming environments in which they feel respected, and they value the support they get from **myplace** centre staff. The role of youth workers in these centres is vital. However, some centres are not fully staffed, and there is a need for centres (and their funders and commissioners) to ensure that their staffing strategies support continuity and stability in these relationships.
- Volunteers are vital for project viability but should not be seen as a cheap option. Strategies for attracting, and managing, volunteers need to be in place and resourced to ensure that volunteers are supported to deliver positive experiences for young people.

### ***The costs of provision***

- Local authorities should recognise the potential for open access provision to offer positive activities to large numbers of young people and maintain a commitment to contributing towards the costs of open access youth centres as part of wider strategies to deliver the Positive for Youth agenda.
- Centres need to be able to demonstrate the on-going costs of provision to potential investors; this requires that they collect robust data on the numbers of young people engaging in activities.
- Close scrutiny of the on-going costs of maintaining the provision would be beneficial, in particular in determining the impacts of increases in user numbers, the costs associated with maintaining the buildings, and the unit costs associated with centres when they run at full capacity.

### ***Revenue Funding***

- Centres need to develop innovative and robust strategies for generating revenue and diversifying income; charging policies offer some scope for raising revenue but are dependent on the nature of facilities and activities on offer, and subsidies are crucial in attracting young people to provision.
- Centres need to further explore the prospects for engaging private sector investors; some centres have developed skills in this area and there is potential for sharing best practice across the **myplace** centre network and beyond.
- Local authorities need to consider maintaining a contribution to open access youth centres, in the context of an overall mixed portfolio of funding; and local strategies for youth provision should support **myplace** centres in their efforts to generate revenue income by brokering engagement with schools and other statutory providers.

Blackburn Youth Zone has been developed on the basis of the Onside funding model. The typical model is 40 per cent from public sector funding (local authority), 10 per cent from young people (membership and fees), 25 per cent from the private sector and 25 per cent through grants and trusts. Blackburn Youth Zone has exceeded expectations in relation to private sector funding and now aims to generate 50 per cent of its revenue through private sector contributions.

### ***Measuring Impact***

- There is a need for policy makers to continue to develop the evidence base on the impact of youth centres, particularly in relation to the longer term impacts of engagement. A longer term longitudinal study would be valuable in increasing understanding of the relationships between short term attendance at youth centres and longer term benefits such as improved attainment. We would caution against assuming these longer term benefits accrue for all young people attending youth centres as on the basis of the evidence presented here the numbers benefitting are likely to be small.

There is also a need to understand better the factors affecting a young person's life beyond their engagement with youth provision, including engagement with other statutory and voluntary services; and there is a need for more robust evidence on the monetary values associated with the outcomes of open-access provision, one option may be to explore the contribution of these outcomes to social well-being.

- Youth centres need to develop systems for gathering accurate data on the numbers and characteristics of young people attending, and on the activities and interventions that they are exposed to. Understanding more clearly the types of intervention a young person receives in youth centres (outputs), and the link with desired outcomes is vital to robust impact assessment. There are a range of frameworks and tools available, which are relevant to the impact of youth centres, and which will help centres understand the impact of their work<sup>5</sup>. Centres need to consider which are relevant to their needs and take account of the starting points for the young people they are working with.
- Centres should consider looking at the relationships between particular interventions taking place in youth centres and a smaller number of specific outcomes. It may be preferable to make a robust case to investors for contributing to some Positive for Youth outcomes than to present less reliable evidence across a wide range of outcomes.
- A baseline needs to be established as soon as possible following a young person's engagement with youth provision. This might involve embedding standard data collection procedures into registration processes for all young people accessing youth centres.
- Outcome change should be measured at regular intervals and over longer time periods. Improving outcomes for young people is not a linear process, and young people's views and experiences may alter at different points in time. It is important to look at trends in outcomes, particularly in relation to issues such as confidence and well-being.
- On-going sharing of best-practice would help centres to develop impact measurement. This might include examples of the application of particular tools and frameworks, and examples of innovative ways to collect data, particularly those which involve young people in determining (and evaluating) approaches.

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<sup>5</sup> These include the Young Foundation framework of outcomes for young people (<http://youngfoundation.org/publications/framework-of-outcomes-for-young-people/>), and New Philanthropy Capital well-being measure for young people (<http://www.well-beingmeasure.com/>) and Impact Measurement in the NEET's sector (<http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/impact-measurement-in-the-neets-sector-2/>)