

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE**

**REPORT OF A REVIEW OF THE WORK OF COMMUNITY YOUTH TUTORS**

**DATE OF REPORT**

November 2007

**INSPECTION TEAM**

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Officer

**COMMUNITY YOUTH TUTOR REVIEW REPORT– NOVEMBER 2007**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Local Authorities have a duty to keep under review the quality of services which they provide in their respective sectors.
- 1.2 Kent Youth Service's quality assurance programme aims to improve service delivery by ensuring that the learning experiences for young people are of the highest standards and the best possible value for money.
- 1.3 The Service has adopted the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) criteria for youth work. A copy of the Kent Youth Service document 'Quality Assurance Framework' is available on request.
- 1.4 During the period 18<sup>th</sup> June to 13<sup>th</sup> August 2007 a thematic review of the work of Community Youth Tutors (CYT) was undertaken. These posts were set up two years previously with 10 being appointed in the first year and a further 10 in the second.
- 1.5 The purpose of this thematic review was to consider from the perspectives of the CYTs and their senior school colleagues how these new posts have developed so far. Consequently, Area Youth Officers and others were not interviewed.
- 1.6 The review was undertaken by Alan Bernstein, Assistant Head of Kent Youth Service (Policy and Standards), Gary Ford, Kent Youth Service Diversity Officer and Ian Kirk, Kent Youth Service Policy and Research Officer.
- 1.7 During the period of the review a total of 19 interviews were held with CYTs (one being on maternity leave) and 10 with senior school colleagues.
- 1.8 Additionally, the interviews were supplemented by written responses.

## 1.9 Interviews covered the following main headings:

- What is good ?
- How is 60% / 40% split used ?
- What needs improving ?
- Who can help ?
- What are the benefits of a CYT compared to other youth workers?
- Projects out of school
- Projects in school
- Relationship to school staff
- Do senior school staff understand the role?
- How often do you meet your day-to-day supervisor?
- Does your day-to-day supervisor advocate for you?
- How is new work identified and old work finished?
- How do young people view your role?
- Diversity in cohort
- Use of budget and additional school resources
- What parts of the school can be used
- Do you teach?
- Training needs
- Involvement in area teams
- Role of area and senior youth officers

1.10 The team would like to record their thanks to everyone who met and talked with them during this review.

## 2. **Main Findings and Recommendations**

- The CYTs are highly valued by their senior school colleagues. Schools want more of their time. For one CYT in a special school, their work was also complimented in a recent Ofsted report of the school (April 2007) – particularly in relation to the contribution made to the PSHE work of the school. (Para 11)
- The CYT role is seen to have a high profile. It is respected and valued by the young people and the CYT is seen as someone to trust and go to. (Para 3)
- They are advocates for young people and seen to be supporting ‘Student Voice’ (student councils), so as to raise the profile for the benefit of the young people. (Para 8)
- Senior school staff are clear that CYTs offer an alternative to what is available from the teaching staff. However, there may be a need for schools to have a grasp of what CYTs do outside of the school just as Youth Service has similarly to grasp the role in school. 9 out of the 20 have a formal teaching role for the school-based element of their work. A further 6 make formal course inputs in support of the school curriculum and some contribute periodically to the formal teaching programme. Generally there is flexibility in the role which is being defined by the needs of the school and the skills and personality of the CYT. There are pros and cons about status by doing some teaching. In some schools, except for senior staff, we picked up a perception from the CYTs that PSHE was seen to be an ‘add in’ rather than a valuable contribution. (Para 11)
- The 60% / 40% split is seen by all as a moveable feast. Where the balance has shifted towards the school it still appears to be in a youth work or pastoral context. This may be because the

criterion for what is Youth Service time and what is school time is unclear except where schools are formally time-tabling the CYTs involvement. Even so, some work beyond that may be seen as youth work but carried out in the school. Also the Job Description talks about a 'Social Education' contribution and isn't specific on how the 60% is to be used. (Para 7)

- One CYT is unique in that he is part of multi-agency support team which he sees as beneficial. However, this may limit the relationship with the general school staff team. This CYT feels that it only works when the school has the control and so didn't work with another service partner, as a result. The pros and cons would need to be explored further. (Para 7)
- There is a need for CYTs to be involved in school INSET days and staff meetings so as to secure their position and not be seen as 'additional'. However, there is also a need for the Area Youth Officers and CYTs to negotiate in advance of the school year with school time-tabling staff regarding the Youth Service's and CYTs personal needs, so that these are included. (Para 10)
- A variety of Deputy or Assistant Heads act as day-to-day supervisors. It was not possible to examine the benefits of a CYT being located in one department rather than another during this review and that could be returned to on another occasion. (Para 11)
- There is a perception generally that all CYTs are pressured for time and, for a number, they feel isolated. Some use each other and other Youth Service colleagues for their personal support. A discussion should be encouraged with the CYTs as to what the answer might be to solving this. (Para 4)
- There appears to be insufficient admin support time. (Para 4)
- It is difficult for CYTs to get time off after a residential. Leave is generally taken in the last week of term or during school holidays. Youth Service management are asked to have an understanding of this and so consider dispensation from some holiday programmes to facilitate a more compassionate response. Alternatively they should discuss with schools whether, for some, it should be programmed into school time. (Para 4)
- It is recommended that there should be one clear day from time-tabling – common across the county for all CYTs - to allow for meetings elsewhere, preparation time or time off in lieu. The Youth Service should then consider programming area and county meetings on this day to allow CYTs the opportunity to be involved and help with overcoming the feeling of isolation. (Para 4)
- New work is often identified by the CYTs themselves, although sometimes it is through discussion with the day-to-day supervisor. The school based work is often time-limited to a term so there can be a natural change for taking on new work. That is with the exception of those CYTs who have a formal teaching role, such as for Citizenship, where this is set by the subject team leader and often by national curriculum requirements. (Para 14)
- The Assistant Head of Kent Youth Service (Fieldwork) had previously been the main lead officer with CYTs through CYT team meetings. This role has now been taken over by the two Assistant Heads Of Service (Operations) for the east and west of the county. It is seen as important for providing the professional lead and as being necessary by all involved with the work. The Area Youth Officers are making regular contact with the CYTs in a number of ways, both formal and informal. However, their contact with senior school staff is variable and for many, meetings with Head Teachers have dwindled. Therefore, it is recommended that Area Youth Officers meet termly with senior school staff (and who are day-to-day supervisors); these meetings may involve the CYT. Also that the appropriate Assistant Head of Kent Youth Service (Operations) meets the

Head Teacher, at least annually, with the Area Youth Officer to review the year and agree the focus for the coming year. (Para 22)

- Some CYTs have confusion about the relationship with both sets of managers and who takes precedence. This needs to be clarified. (Para 22)

### **3. What's Good?**

The CYT role is seen to have a high profile. It is respected and valued by the young people and the CYT is seen as someone to trust and go to. The CYTs bring a youth work ethic into formal educational settings. Breakfast clubs and evening work offer opportunities to contribute to the extended schools agenda and meet the 'Every Child Matters' objectives. The work enables youth workers to engage with young people at risk of exclusion. It offers conflict resolution and a mediation role between young people and teachers along with behaviour modification for those young people who need it "He is keeping young people out of trouble" (a Deputy Head). Life's experiences are seen to be of benefit in this work.

These experiences for one CYT were demonstrated by their Deputy Head Teacher who explained how he negotiated with teachers for young people excluded from a lesson to go to his room, which is seen by many young people as a sanctuary and he then works with them. In some cases, he also goes to see families to involve them in his work. In another instance a Head Teacher described a young girl pupil who was demonstrating serious behavioural problems and on one occasion had to be held down by four school staff; following the CYT's appointment and subsequent interventions with the young woman around anger management, she was now seen as a credit to the school. "This work gives young people the opportunity to further develop their self-esteem" (An Assistant Head). The Community Youth Tutor's role in the community sells the school. The role provides full access to all in the school. The role is seen to be creative and flexible.

### **4. What Needs Improving?**

There is a perception generally that all CYTs are pressured for time and, for a number, they feel isolated. Some use each other and other Youth Service colleagues for their personal support. A discussion should be encouraged with the CYTs as to what the answer might be to solving this. One suggestion regarding overcoming the feeling of isolation was for the Youth Service Management Team to provide a termly newsletter specifically for CYTs informing them of developments. There appears to be insufficient admin support time too.

The more the role is established the more demands are made on it. One Head Teacher said that there is a "need to clarify building capacity around a proven resource" One Community Youth Tutor quoted that they had not had any days off for 7 weeks. Another found it "Difficult to get time off after a residential". Leave is generally taken in the last week of term or during school holidays. Youth Service management are asked to have an understanding of this and so consider dispensation from some holiday programmes to facilitate a more compassionate response. Alternatively they should discuss with schools whether, for some, it should be programmed into school time.

One CYT proposed "a clear day for work outside school and a programme that will give me flexibility in the school e.g. lesson first thing in day and last but nothing between. As it's a two week time table there is nothing the next week so it is difficult to make regular arrangements". It is recommended that there should be one clear day from time-tabling to allow for meetings elsewhere, preparation time or time off in lieu. The Youth Service should then consider programming area and county meetings on this day to allow CYTs the opportunity to be involved and help with overcoming the feeling of isolation.

“It feels like a bolt on to the Youth Service and not a part of the overall strategy, also to become more mainstream in the school”. “The power dynamics are very strong – if you are not a teacher you are seen to have a lesser status”.

There is a lack of knowledge about the role and level of expertise as well as what youth work is all about. An Assistant Head said that the “external role needs to be made clearer to school staff”.

“The SLA needs reviewing – what does ‘providing appropriate plans for youth work’ mean?”

An agreement was sought from the Youth Service to appoint 3hr part-time staff rather than 6-9 hrs. This was because there was more likelihood of recruiting learning support assistants. Particularly because they know the young people from the daytime work and continuity would be maintained.

A dedicated youth club was identified for one school site by the Head Teacher, if funds can be found. He had already contacted the District Council who had indicated that developer contribution funding might be available and it is in the Youth Service developer contribution proposals. A piece of land has also been identified for this development.

Two CYTs identified the need for a specific youth work area to give emphasis to their work.

## **5. Who Can Help?**

Most feel this is down to them. Regular meetings between Area Youth Officers and day-to-day Supervisors help.

One CYT felt that the Youth Service Management Team needed “to be more forceful about the Youth Service agenda. Partnership needs to be seen as equal.”

## **6. What are the benefits of a CYT compared to other Youth Workers?**

“Closer relationship with many young people, as I see them more often than an evening based provision.” (a CYT)

“Acts as a ‘broker’ and passes young people on to other youth work provision” (a CYT)

“Acts as a bridge between family, community and the school because of the unique relationship and understanding.” (a CYT)

- Supporting Area events
- Links to the school - Youth workers can be helped to access school resources
- Some special needs work taking place in a nearby youth centre
- Joint challenges on work around behaviour
- Young people in the area senior member training group
- Support - Learning Assistants involved in out of school activities with youth service colleagues
- Access to larger numbers of young people and generally working with more of them

## **7. How is 60% / 40% split used?**

The 60% / 40% split is seen by all as a moveable feast. Where the balance has shifted towards the school it still appears to be in a youth work or pastoral context. This may be because the criterion for what is Youth Service time and what is school time is unclear except where schools are formally time-tabling the CYTs involvement. "Confused criteria to maintain the balance – what is the line?" Even so, some work beyond that may be seen as youth work but carried out in the school. Also the Job Description talks about a 'Social Education' contribution and isn't specific on how the 60% is to be used. Most say they are working 50/50 but for one CYT "Open access makes this difficult" Another admitted to spending 80% of his time for the school and another 70%. In all cases, holiday time is 100% dedicated for the Youth Service – although clearly many school students will benefit from holiday programmes involving the CYT.

One CYT is unique in that he is part of multi-agency support team which he sees as beneficial. Though, this may limit the relationship with the general school staff team. This CYT feels that it only works when the school has the control and so didn't work with another service partner, as a result. The pros and cons would need to be explored further.

## **8. Projects in school**

The CYTs are advocates for young people and seen to be supporting 'Student Voice' (student councils), so as to raise the profile for the benefit of the young people.

The more formal school role includes:

- Teaching Citizenship
- PHSE inputs
- School Council / Student Voice
- Alternative Curriculum Programme support
- Disaffected student education
- Work experience
- Prefect training
- Transition project
- Child protection issues
- ASDAN Courses

Other school inputs include:

- Peer Mentoring
- Anger Management
- Sexual Health Guidance
- Smoking cessation
- Various clubs e.g. vulnerable girls group, boys club
- First aid training
- Residential work
- Transition work

## **9. Projects out of school**

The contribution to youth work includes:

- After school clubs
- Special needs or other targeted groups (eg Vulnerable girls' group, boys' club, LGB young people's club)
- Holiday Programmes / Reach For The Sky, residential work
- Try Angle Awards
- Neighbourhood-based Detached work,
- Supporting local youth clubs
- Work with other Youth Service teams on a regular basis
- Various training programmes such as smoking cessation, first aid, sexual health, peer mentoring, behaviour modification
- Diversity work, work with young Nepalese, Kick Racism out of Football

## **10. Relationship to school staff**

Some views were expressed to show that whilst the senior school staff were generally clear about the role and its value this was not always so for the rest of the school staff; because a number of CYTs were not seen to be a part of the teaching staff their professional role might not be understood or valued as highly. This changes where CYTs assert themselves and the contribution they can make but for a number needs to be worked on with the help of senior school staff.

There is a need for CYTs to be involved in school INSET days and staff meetings so as to secure their position and not be seen as additional. However, there is also a need for the Area Youth Officers and CYTs to negotiate in advance of the school year with school time-tabling staff regarding the Youth Service's and CYTs personal needs, so that these are included.

## **11. Do senior school staff understand the role?**

The CYTs are highly valued by their senior school colleagues. Schools want more of their time. For one CYT in a special school, their work was also complimented in a recent OfSTED report of the school (April 2007) – particularly in relation to the contribution made to the PSHE work of the school.

Senior school staff are clear that CYTs offer an alternative to what is available from teaching staff. However, there may be a need for schools to have a grasp of what CYTs do outside of the school - just as the Youth Service has to grasp the role in school. Generally there is flexibility in the role which is being defined by the needs of the school and the skills and personality of the Tutor. There are pros and cons about status by doing some teaching. In some schools except for senior staff, the inspectors picked up a perception from the CYTs that PSHE was seen to be an 'add in' rather than a valuable contribution.

A variety of Deputy or Assistant Heads act as day-to-day supervisors. It was not possible to examine the benefits of a CYT being located in one department rather than another during this review and that could be returned to on another occasion.

**12. How often do you meet your Day-to-day supervisor?**

For most CYTs they meet their day-to-day supervisors regularly and feel supported by this. However, for a small number this is not the case. Where supervision is limited it could be deduced that the CYT is trusted but could also be being left to their own devices. In other instances, it may be because one or other person is busy and meetings have reduced by default. Individual cases will be identified outside of this report for further discussion between the respective schools, youth service managers and CYTs

**13. Does your day-to-day supervisor advocate for you?**

The response to this question was patchy. Some do advocate, some CYTs do it for themselves and in other instances it may not be seen to be necessary.

**14. How is new work identified and old work finished?**

New work is often identified by the CYTs themselves, although sometimes through discussion with the day-to-day supervisor. The school based work is often time limited to a term so there can be a natural change for taking on new work. That is with the exception of those CYTs who have a formal teaching role, such as for Citizenship and PSHE, where this is set by the subject team leader and often by national curriculum requirements.

A small number undertake development plans for the year but can make spontaneous responses to young people's ideas or be needs led.

**15. How do Young People view your role?**

"The students love .....s activities and have great respect and commitment for him" (a Head Teacher)

"approachable, care, confidential and provides learning opportunities." (a CYT)

"Young people have seen the role evolve. ... is very accessible. He works with 900 young people a year". (a Head Teacher)

"Some confusion in understanding school and after school roles but becomes clearer when they seek support and advice." (a CYT)

"young people will view role according to where accessed – as teaching assistant, youth worker or from 1:1 relationships." (a CYT)

"Over time relationships have been built up and mutual respect developed but had to set real hard and fast boundaries to overcome young people seeing CYT as a soft touch." (a CYT)

"Fully involved in out of school activities although limited for some by their learning needs." (a CYT)

All are seen to act as a advocates, a provider of opportunities that the school wouldn't otherwise offer. Young people are seen to be regularly involved in design and delivery.

**16. Diversity in Cohort**

There was acknowledgement that BME and disabled young people formed a part of the school population but there was little clarity demonstrated regarding the make-up of the groups that the CYTs were working with. With three exceptions there was also little demonstration of work being undertaken to discover their needs for planned responses to these. Consideration should be given to providing some needs analysis training in this regard. From that there may be a need for further training regarding the needs of particular young people and how to respond to them.

**17. Use of budget and additional school resources**

The basic breakdown of the budget involved salaries for support staff and subsidy for projects, trips, materials and equipment. In general the funding available appeared to be used wisely and was sufficient.

**18. What parts of the school can be used**

All CYTs had general access to the school provision, although booking is necessary for some. Free use of minibuses and specialist areas are also made available to others.

Evening use is restricted for some CYTs where a school closes at 6pm. Yet other CYTs are given keys and alarm codes to get in after hours. This should be discussed further, where deemed appropriate to the work, particularly as the Extended Services agenda is introduced. This also needs to be considered where valuable work is being undertaken in the community and would cease if the CYT withdraws into the school or sees that possibility as an easy option.

**19. Do you teach?**

9 out of the 20 have a formal teaching role. A further 6 make formal course inputs in support of the school curriculum and some contribute periodically to the formal teaching programme. Generally there is flexibility in the role which is being defined by the needs of the school and the skills and personality of the Tutor. There are pros and cons about status by doing some teaching.

**20. Training Needs**

10 of the CYTs answered this question. Their responses ranged from wanting to undertake an MA to needing diversity training, practical computing skills or lesson planning. These responses will be passed to the Youth Service's Staff Development and Training Officer or host school, as appropriate.

**21. Involvement in area teams**

Generally, all attend regularly – as and when their school timetable permits. One or two cannot attend due to teaching – hence the recommendation for a clear day when such meeting might take place. For some CYTs, this is important for them to enable a 'plug-in' to the Youth Service and to help overcome their feeling of isolation. It is also important for them to keep in touch with professional development in their specialist field.

**22. Role of Area Youth Officer and Senior Youth Service Managers**

The Area Youth Officers are making regular contact with the CYTs in a number of ways, both formal and informal. meetings together are variable – some 6 to 8 weekly and some termly

Area Youth Officers' contact with senior school staff is variable and, for many, meetings with Head Teachers have dwindled. Therefore, it is recommended that Area Youth Officers meet at least termly with the senior school staff who act as the CYTs' day-to-day supervisors. Also that the appropriate Assistant Head of Kent Youth Service (Operations) and local Area Youth Officer meets the Head Teacher at least annually to review the year and agree the focus for the coming year.

Some CYTs have confusion about the relationship with both sets of managers and who takes precedence. This needs to be clarified.

For senior Youth Service staff, the Assistant Head of Kent Youth Service (Operations) had been the main lead officer with CYT's through CYT team meetings. This role has now been taken over by the two Assistant Heads of Service (Operations) for the east and west of the county. It is seen as important for providing the professional lead seen as being necessary by all involved with the work. Contact with other senior youth service staff is on an informal basis. CYTs felt that they were all accessible and responded well when needed.