
YOUTH *in the community*

Tomlinson, the Green Paper and beyond

a national conference
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compiled by Bill Law

The Career-learning NETWORK

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The Government's anticipated Youth Green Paper, it is promised, will put local government at the heart of an integrated offer to youth services.

The conference organisers invited community workers, Connexions people, educators, police officers, policy people, programme managers, youth-service people, volunteer helpers and young men and women to debate and discuss the key themes identified by this promise. The themes included:

- a. what methods and benefits are there in consulting young people on the delivery of services?
- b. what can be anticipated for the future of young people's services, and the targets for encouraging young people in volunteering?
- c. what is the role of active citizenship in young people's development?

Speakers were from:

The Association of Principal Youth and Community Officers,
The Citizenship Foundation,
a Connexions company,
DfES,
Groundwork,
a local authority,
The National Youth Agency,
The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority,
The Russell Commission on voluntary work,
UK Youth,
The UK Youth Parliament.

This is an account of the conference. It will be useful as a catalyst for thought, discussion and planning concerning how we can develop this work. It includes youth work, Children's Trusts, Connexions, citizenship, volunteering and extended schools. This document comprises direct quotations from the conference – some from the platform, some from the audience and some from conversations.

The quotations are organised into four sets of issues:

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1. THE POLICY CONTEXT

the Green Paper, policy drivers, influences, performance indicators, ways forward, loose ends

- > **where are we now in relation to the green paper?** – needs for both momentum and consultation;
- > **what are the policy drivers?** – dealing with young people, finding partners in provision, integrating resources;
- > **influences on provision** – local and central, professional and voluntary, public and private, provider's and user's;
- > **what do useful performance indicators do** – monitor? improve? distort? confuse? distract?
- > **which way is forward?** - enough? useful? clear? broad-based? do-able?
- > **loose ends** – Connexions, ring-fence the funding, think again about Tomlinson, include young adults, clean up the logistics.

where are we now?

'...it's not a Green Paper that we need it is 'a Cellophane Paper' – both setting out a vision and inviting ideas about how it can be realised...'

'...policy has been active: on the New Deal and stable economy, on the youth justice system - including antisocial behaviour orders, on Connexions, on Transforming Work, on The Children's Act, on the NHS framework - dealing for the first time with the health needs of adolescents, on the Tomlinson Report - which we must do something about, on the Russell Report of voluntary action, and on the Green Paper...'

'...why haven't we got The Green Paper? It is a forty-year-old story. There are two reasons: (1) there is an issue about who is to be responsible for doing these things - the law is a miasma which requires that the Learning and Skills Council or Local Authority must be told what to do; and (2) who is going to pay for it? Both present central government with difficult choices...'

'...soccer teams can suffer from unusual illnesses – like malaria! The Green Paper has been delayed because there have been a few cases in the government's team of what you might call "metaphorical malaria"...'

'...the Green Paper has been much delayed, but in reality there has been very little consultation on the Green Paper in recent months...'

'...do we need a Green Paper? We have some good policy already. But the Children's Act draws attention to the earlier years. That is where the centre of gravity now is...'

policy drivers

'...moral panics usually have some seeds of entirely proper concern - but they get blown out of proportion...'

'...we have become frightened for the young and frightened of the young...'

... 'when it comes to young people there are concerns about health, anti-social behaviour, education, work, voting and not voting...'

'...part of the wider government strategy is to support the voluntary and community sector...'

'...the Russell Commission is on young people volunteering – on “youth action and engagement”...'

'...the policy focus is no longer on the school but on children and their families...'

'...there is a high-level push towards integration...'

influences on provision

'...if there were anybody other than local government capable of doing what is needed, then central government would have found it by now. There is nobody else who can deliver this service...'

'...government needs to think about how to get local focus with a national approach, and to realise that young people do not live and work within local authority boundaries...'

'...but ministers cannot resist their own special projects and do not entirely trust local authorities. They are not sure that the money will get the response...'

'...if we remove ring fences and allow local decision making to prioritise there is a risk that something will be lost...'

'...in the future of Children's Trusts the local authority and the voluntary sector will become more important in policy...'

'...the Learning Skills Development Agency is seeking approaches to citizenship learning which are both formal and informal...'

'...the private sector is to be the key stakeholder group for volunteering. The body set up to organise it will have private-sector leadership...'

'...we will know that young people's views are being taken into account though performance indicators and inspections – they can tell us how far children and young people are driving the service...'

'...there is a need for a shared sense of purpose between government, the voluntary sector and young people...'

looking for indications of performance

'...how do we know we are meeting needs. How good are we at monitoring effectiveness. And why are one-in-four youth services currently failing their Ofsted inspection?'

'...there is a concern for outcomes. The five outcomes ('being healthy', 'staying safe', 'enjoying and achieving', 'making a positive contribution' and 'economic well-being') offer a paradigm shift - away from provider structures and towards user results...'

'...Careers Services have been too limited in their scope. Connexions has brought in a more targeted approach and more resources...'

'...everybody understands an outcomes focus...'

'...a focus on outcomes changes the way government does its business...'

'...a concern for outcomes leads to the politics of behaviour. It needs us to see lower levels of alcohol abuse, pregnancy, crime and so on...'

'...you need to have a mission but you need to have a mission which will drive behaviour...'

'...the quality of volunteering schemes should be kite-marked...'

'...the risk of targeting young people is that it will be done at the expense of a universal service - which could then become much poorer...'

'...everybody out there has a slightly different view of what should be an outcome...'

'...targets are confusing. 'NEET' and 'not-NEET' are not necessarily exclusive groups. We need to be in a position to develop our own targets. Local Area Agreements have been much more successful in arriving at shared targets. We need less from government...'

'...the police, the youth-offending team, the youth service, the social services - all have different targets. It's target tension...'

'...we are moving away from targets. They will not entirely disappear because government needs to know what is being achieved. But we have too many targets - we need, fewer, smarter targets which indicate broadly described community values and gains...'

'...when we first embarked on this we were not quite sure what the outcome would be...'

'...realising that you can wind up in a good place, but not the place you imagined you might go to, this is a contradiction of the point that we are moving away from process to outcome. This is about the value of process...'

'...our experience is that you land somewhere better than were you started. But some times it is somewhere you didn't expect to land...'

'...what we are doing will be less like playing a football match with a clear and single goal in plain site, more like orienteering – with a map and compass to find ways forward...'

which way is forward?

'...there is lots of speculation. The real question is what's happening to the government's vision for young people - first expressed in 'Bridging the Gap'. How are we going to move on from there? But, instead, we are focussing on institutions - by, for example, asking 'what's happening to Connexions?''...'

'...ministers are still thinking...'

'...this is a difficult transition stage and it must be managed carefully...'

'...I think now they are making progress in the DfES...'

'...we do not work well where we think that schools are just about GCSEs...'

'...I have five tests for the Green Paper:

1. are the goals turned into proper entitlements, which can be cashed in everywhere?
2. is what is offered relevant to young people's concerns, continuing to engage them in design and delivery?
3. can responsibility be made clear, with a clear legal basis of the work?
4. is the service accessible and diverse?
5. is it sustainable, with a level of resource greater than we have now?'

'...the Youth Green Paper points to more things to do. There must be a focus on personal development and informal learning building on the success of services like Connexions, but with better support for those in particular need and working more closely with schools...'

'...as to accessing advice and guidance - the government is "brand" aware regarding Connexions...'

'...the regeneration and the education agendas overlap...'

'...there are two mechanisms for improvement. One is 'choice'. There will be something about choice in the Green Paper. The other is 'voice'. How do you involve the consumer?'

'...prosperity is not about wealth, it is about the health of a whole community...'

'...it is not often that you hear somebody make positive remarks about Connexions, youth services and the education service all in one speech'...

loose ends

'...we must hope that Connexions is not completely abolished...'

'...there are too many funding streams and too much of it is ring-fenced. Statutory services come first in the pecking order - leaving an enormous resource gap for the rest...'

'...the Youth White Paper and the White Paper on 14-19 Curriculum were bound to intersect...'

'...Tomlinson? Hopefully a lot will start to come back now...'

'...the government has missed an opportunity with Tomlinson. But you can still do something about it locally...'

'...the title of the government's consultative document might have been "Every a Child and Young Person Matters"...'

'...it is difficult to see how the trusts will commission voluntary sources - the publication of the guidance on that has been much delayed...'

'...there are gaps in provision. We need new try-out schemes, and more full-time schemes. There would then be an introductory part-time-full-time progression - forming a coherent range of opportunities...'

'...local area agreements must be reached in a tight time scale. It is too early to say how well all of this is working...'

2. LEARNING NEEDS

listening TO YP, YP influencing,
understanding needs, helping, gains

- > **listening to young people** – on what is important, on how help should be provided;
- > **young people in influential roles** – ‘legislature’ and ‘executive’ – from across the social spectrum;
- > **understanding learning needs** – moving from what they say, and - beyond what we currently provide - to what we need to understand;
- > **helping frameworks** – a network of help, from training and advice to enjoyment and experience;
- > **for gaining what?** – skills, confidence and commitment.

listening to young people

‘...young people have clear views about what should happen - for example concerning anti-social behaviour orders, which certainly need to be applied in a reasonable manner...’

‘...the Russell Commission found a demand among young people for volunteering opportunities - through focus groups and other techniques...’

‘...the issues raised by young people include Connexions and violence...’

‘...a young person asked what do you think of citizenship? – “I didn't like the sound of it at first. I thought it would be about whether my mates would be allowed to stay in this country or not”...’

‘...we think we know what young people want - so we don't ask them...’

‘...we have learned what young people want to be consulted about – they are concerned about what services we can offer...’

‘...young people care about the environment. They are willing to enter into conversational about it - where they can sit, and talk and play...’

‘...we have an opportunity to enter into partnership with young people, and one of the best opportunities of involving young people...’

‘...it is possible that young people are getting pissed off with citizenship about power and politics. But, when you give them a chance to talk and be constructive about it, they become more engaged...’

‘...it's all about ownership, and ownership is responsibility. This is no easy option for young people...’

‘...we hear a lot about young people from the media. But we don't hear much about millennium volunteers...’

'...I want to know how many in the audience have a hoodie in their cupboard...'

'...if you want respect from the young then you must give respect to the young...'

'...sometimes issues are seen more clearly through the eyes of young people...'

young people in influential roles

'...we need to move young people from a consultative to an executive position. A Youth Parliament means making our own mark...'

'...young people's views must be taken into account at the design stage, at the delivery stage and at the review stage...'

'...young people are heavily involved in the discussions after the riots in Burnley. It made people realise that they have a lot to say...'

'...the structure in Devon shows how young people's views can be built in. It includes heated, interesting and well-organised contacts with members of the council...'

'...young people are now involved in the appointment of a Children's Commissioner...'

'...there is a fallacy that people on youth councils are middle class. We have young people who come to us from across the social spectrum. They learn with us, they learn how to challenge us and make their own points, and they do it with confidence'...

'...young people need to know what the budget is and how it can be used...'

understanding learning needs

'...young-people-led activity will not - by itself - make citizenship with political and social dimensions...'

'...it is because children need safeguarding. But children also need their autonomy. We need a Green Paper which moves us on - to think about the needs of the adolescent...'

'...moving from adolescence to adulthood takes different people different lengths of time. In Connexions we should use discretion - as far as formal constraints allow. We can extend the help we give to 24-year-olds...'

'...we are talking about processes of their learning and not a status of our provision...'

'...it is not unreasonable to say to the services "you are in contact with young people", and to go on "you say you are an education service - try to get some learning achieved"...'

'...the government set up the commission on volunteering to support and develop skills that we do not give primacy to in education - leadership, cooperation and other "soft" skills...'

'...there are deep-seated issues for transition from childhood to adulthood and the sometimes irreversible paths they contain...'

'...the 14-19 framework is complex. So how do we ensure that young people can access the help that they need?...'

'...volunteering permeates all aspects of our national life - sport, social help and so on. And so it is a complicated field for young people to understand...'

'...we can provide the framework but we need also to support young people in their use of it...'

helping frameworks

'...one-stop-shops are useful ways of enabling access...'

'...we can collapse key workers role too much - trying to pack in too much. Young people need a range of helpers, each with a different focus...'

'...some young people would rather use the web than go to an adviser...'

'...young people have devised a board game which they then played with the police and Connexions people. It is a way of expressing their experience of crime. It is also a way of helping adults understand...'

'...it is not something that any school can avoid...'

'...there may be many things we can deliver though non-school contexts - for new-comers to this country, for older people and for young people for whom their school just does not work...'

'...the jewel in the Connexions crown is the development of the personal adviser and the different ways of working that are developing which involve young people...'

'...seventy-six percent of young people report having made progress from their meetings with a personal adviser...'

'...the training we did was quite intense...'

'...follow young people's natural interests and skills. Like doing-up bikes in a high bike-crime area...'

`...the media for young people's engagement include text messaging...'

`...we made a song to go alongside the march. ..

`...we got involved with victims and their families. We went around when it was raining. We got soaked...'

for gaining what?

`...this work develops unfamiliar skills: performance management, financial management, people management, being cost effective, best value, leadership and confidentiality...'

`...need to learn how to campaign - whether it is on gun crime or on the quality of school meals...'

`...we had six training session - and it gave us confidence in doing things together. '

`...not just hard learning it gave us a lot of fun as well...'

`...what did our friends think about this? They tried to sneak into our meetings...'

`...what I've learned in Youth Action I will carry for the rest of my life - especially when I am with young kids...'

`...gun crime affects the community. It doesn't necessarily affect us as individuals. But it hurts us when we hear that somebody else has been killed. We want to make a positive difference...'

`...what does it feel like to take part in this? It feels like I won an Oscar...'

3. PROVIDER ATTITUDES how we see YP, our readiness, its importance

- > **how we see young people and their families** – look and learn;
- > **how ready are we for these new developments** – structures of resistance and dynamics of hope;
- > **the importance of attitude** – belief and love.

how we see young people and their families

'...teachers may have a fixed view of parents - but they must come to realise that they must change their behaviour'...

'...we have a distinct lack of respect for young people's rights in this country. You can die for your country but you can't vote. Young people feel that they are not part of our community and that someone should be taking this seriously...'

'...the main thing that stops young people getting involved is adults! We are tokenistic; we think we know best. We are afraid of them - especially on housing estates...'

'...there has been a lot of consultation... words... boxes ticked... grants obtained... Thank you and well done! Now you know what it is liked to be patronised...'

'...children and young people are citizens. Adults forget that...'

'...trainee youth workers can be afraid of young people. They put barriers in the way of meeting them...'

'...the thing that changes fearful attitudes is face-to-face contact. We need to spend more time with young people - first hand...'

'...feel the fear and do it anyway...'

'...this is the most pro-social generation of young people on record...'

'...where is the next generation of "us" to come from. It is from these young people...'

readiness for a new developments

'...if we were going into an 1870s school we would not be surprised. The equipment and techniques are much the same now as they were then. Nor would there be any surprises for 1870s people coming into our schools...'

'...it is true that there had been William Morris – architect of the Community-based Village College. But now things are looking up again. New ideas are rolling out...'

'...some people in the 'Chris-Woodhead-era' seemed to believe that schools can be hermetically sealed...'

'...education for citizenship changes the nature of the school. When you are teaching about democracy you can't do it in an authoritarian way...'

'...every student in our school in Years 7, 8 and 9 will learn about our work on gun crime...'

'...we need people who will get "out there" – with the young people. Are we just distant advocates on their behalf, and are we going to rely on the youth service for everything?...'

'...extended schools is currently the government's flagship policy. Traditional schools have reached the pinnacle of their development. They are like the Cutty Sark - no longer fit for purpose...'

'...the kind of people we now need will be different from the people we now have...'

'...there is a time in the policy-making cycle when we have an opportunity to do something significant. This one of those times. It may be the time when we can really make a difference to youth work. Some say it's being too rushed. But this is the chance we have now. It is also your chance. Please don't waste it...'

the importance of belief and love

'...“I have russet-coated captains who know what they fight for and love what they know.” (Oliver Cromwell on the success of his army)...'

'...I e-mailed colleagues for examples of what can be done to respond to this new opportunity. I was inundated...'

'...education for citizenship is about what is going on in our society and how to make a difference...'

'...when young people decide they want to take an initiative do you know what that gives us? - it gives hope for the future...'

4. LOCAL ORGANISATION its pros-and-cons, and complexity, management style

- > **local pros-and-cons** – local accountability or local entrapment – in the authority or the trust;
- > **using and resolving the complexity** – varied and competing interests need coordinating;
- > **local management style** – tough responses for tender developments?

local pros and cons

'...local government is large enough to pull together the services necessary for this task. But unlike central government and regional agencies, local government is close to local communities...'

'...local government can be called to account - perhaps more so than central government...'

'...and - thus – it leads to the need for integration. It is about how we manage the resources for young people - how is the trust going to be able to draw in help voluntary and local help...'

'...as to getting partnerships working - the real issue is how we build on what we've got at the local level. The DfES can give too much guidance...'

'...there is a drive towards localism. But some communities are not very benign places. We should be cautious about localism...'

'...an effective Trust needs a vibrant local community. And good services need a diverse and sustained relationship - over time...'

'...moving forward will mean that we need to work the 'Children's Trust' way of working...'

'...the idea of partnership is key. "Groundwork" often acts like glue - bringing together a range of resources...'

using and resolving the complexity

'...why do we build a new children's centre here when we have a school right there?'

'...there can be three different organisations - all in the same building - and all serving the same young people...'

'...we need a single 14+-strategy. A single local authority can have twenty-or-more organisation - all with their own plans for the group...'

'...the youth and community service is, in reality, the local authority and voluntary services combined...'

'...Connexions is a partnership between the statutory, the voluntary and the private...'

'...but we are still working in silos - even among voluntary associations...'

'...the service must be inclusive with all providers – such as Connexions and 14-19 schools...'

'...there is competition for becoming providers. And - in that setting – informal providers are thought to be less important...'

'...assessment and performance is driven most by the education and social services...'

'...civility is important. But there is disagreement. Some think that schools should not be concerned with minority groups. There is some anger on issues like this; but we keep it behind closed doors...'

'...it is not that schools are building their empires all over again? This time it must be a partnership...'

'...there is a risk that school will exceed their remit and over-ride what others do...'

'...sometimes it feels easier not to work together - to walk away...'

'...the Children's Trust arrangement agrees outcomes, identifies resources to achieve them - whether in health, welfare or education...'

'...there is no single profession which can do everything. We need all of them...'

local management style

'...the idea of the big-headteacher is probably no longer fit for current conditions...'

'...many local-government people do not like their new roles of "champions", "commissioners" and "auditors". They are used to the idea that they are "controllers" - although they never really were...'

'...there are risks in providing for local flexibility. Making funding decisions close to the front line means that "my area of work" might be what we stop doing...'

'...the Local Area Agreement model - which includes both children and young people - allows partners and stakeholders to be called to account...'

'...the role of the key worker is to underpin systems and develop tracking arrangements...'

'...the key to partnership is understanding how we each would contribute to a single vision. That shared vision provides a link through to developing provision and starting plans...'

Bill Law wrote down at the time as much as he could of what was said. The quotations are as accurate as the limitations of his handwriting-speed and acuity can get them. There is occasional paraphrasing, to take account of context. The whole is as impartial as Bill's self-awareness will allow. No claims are made about representativeness or completeness.

Nonetheless the quotations raise critical issues for the future of youth work, Children's Trusts, Connexions, citizenship, volunteering and extended schools. The Career-learning Network's 'CPI papers' are intended to set out the research-and-development terms in which these issues now urgently need to be resolved. For free access go to www.hihohiho.com – 'moving on' – *what are we going to do about careers?*

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