



# Developing youth activities programmes

## Issues to consider





When organisations and individuals develop policy, programmes and projects, they may often bring different approaches and understandings to bear. If these are discussed, set out and agreed from the beginning, the programme will be more likely to meet its intended aims and the expectations of its stakeholders.

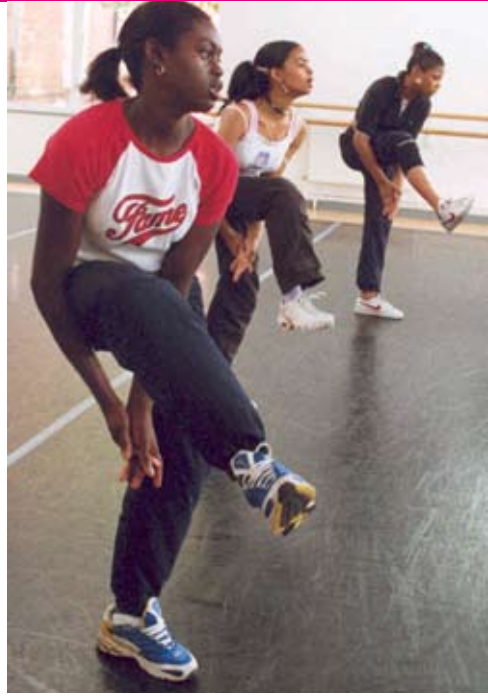
We have developed the following list on the basis of common themes that have emerged from various evaluations undertaken by the Big Lottery Fund and others. These evaluations have looked at 'youth activity programmes' – typically those that offer various groups of 'young people' (generally those between 11 and 18) different types of 'activities' – prescribed at a programme or project level – with the intention that these will both positively engage young people and lead to changes in their lives.

While most people would agree that there are benefits in offering activities



of this type to all or various groups of young people, the reasons for doing so may vary. Is it simply to occupy their time (and keep them out of trouble), to educate them, develop various social or specific skills, or to promote health and fitness? And how will the activities do this?

This document is aimed at people involved in developing this type of programme or project, but it can be easily adapted for those working in related fields. Similarly, the questions are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to help promote discussion, debate and ultimately clear agreement.



## Aims and definitions

Have you considered the following:

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▶ **Does your programme have a single, clear aim?**

If there are several aims and objectives, how do they fit together?

Will individual projects have to meet some or all of these?

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▶ **Have you defined your target group?**

Do you know how you will identify individuals who are in the target group, and how many there are?

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▶ **Does your target group fit with the overall aim?**

How will the approach you offer deal with their specific needs?

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▶ **If you refer to potential target beneficiaries by demographic categories (notably ethnicity, gender or disability), do you have evidence of their specific needs?**

Does your approach generalise and stereotype?

▶ **Have you made sure that all projects work towards the overall aim without imposing an inflexible approach?**

How much leeway can you offer at a local level, and how will you monitor this?

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▶ **If you use the term 'at risk', have you defined it?**

What are beneficiaries 'at risk' of, and how will your programme address that risk?

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▶ **Will the application and referral processes deal with that concept of 'risk'? If so, how?**

## Context

Have you considered the following:

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▶ **Are similar programmes currently running?**

If so, what ones?

Is yours different, and how?

Do the aims and target group differ?

Will potential staff and participants be confused?

What strategies will you use to overcome this confusion?

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▶ **Are there enough skilled staff available to run projects?**

Do you know that your target group will attend?

If so, how?

## Consultation and involvement

Have you considered the following:

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▶ **Do you distinguish consultation from gathering evidence?**

If so, how?

What role does each play, and how

do you use them?

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▶ **Have you considered what is the right level of involvement by young people at programme and project level?**

How did you decide this?

How will you avoid tokenism?

What exactly will your approach to consultation and involvement by young people achieve?

Will it improve recruitment and retention?

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▶ **Are you putting aside resources to support the engagement of young people in your planning and management of the programme and of projects?**

What requirements do projects have to do this, and how much support will you offer?

## Designing programme activities and theories of change

Have you considered the following:

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- ▶ **Do the activities and services you offer meet the need and achieve the wider changes that you have identified?**

If so, how?

What is the logic of how they will work?

Can you set it out?

What evidence is this based on?

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- ▶ **Will your programme and projects take account of the scale of need?**

Which agencies are you talking to to clarify these matters?

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- ▶ **Have you considered the effectiveness of offering activities and services across mixed age and gender groups?**

What are the advantages and problems?

How will you avoid stereotyping?

## Targeting, recruitment and retention

Have you considered the following:

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- ▶ **Have you thought about how you will manage targeted or wider provision, at programme and project level?**

Box 1 at the end of this document sets out one way of considering this.

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- ▶ **If you are trying to attract young people who are disengaged or disaffected, have you thought about how you will deal with the inevitable level of drop-out?**

What follow-up mechanisms will you put into place to deal with those who do drop out?

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- ▶ **Have you thought about numbers of participants and how managing attendance might affect quality of provision?**

Is this a concern?

How will you manage presentation of this tension?



- ▶ **If you plan to offer your programme to all young people, will you ensure that it will reach those with the greatest need?**

If so, how?

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- ▶ **If you plan to target your programme, will you ensure that you do not stigmatise participants?**

If so, how?

What support and resources will you offer to ensure that you can recruit and retain those who are hard to reach?

Do you offer a range of referral processes into the programme to help deal with this?

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- ▶ **If you choose to balance wide and targeted provision, have you thought about your requirements and how will you communicate this balance to service providers?**

- ▶ **Will you ensure that all relevant young people have access to the project?**

If so, how?

Have you fully considered such issues as transport and childcare costs?

Will you fund these directly?

## Tracking and monitoring

Have you considered the following:

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- ▶ **Is there a tracking or monitoring system in place that will help you to identify individual young people who might benefit (notably the level of attendance and the nature of participants)?**

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- ▶ **Are there tracking and monitoring systems in place that will allow you to compare performance across all areas?**  
If not, how will you identify good results and best practice?

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- ▶ **How do you manage monitoring and tracking without introducing bureaucratic and intrusive approaches?**

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- ▶ **Do you have standardised systems in place to track the progress of participants through the programme?**  
If so, what are they?  
If you are working towards

specified outcomes for individuals, what is your attitude to those who go part of the way towards achieving them?

How will you provide further support to those participants after the project ends?

## Evaluation

Have you considered the following:

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- ▶ **Will you measure the changes that you hope to achieve?**  
If so, how?

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- ▶ **Are you going to use findings from monitoring and evaluation during the course of the programme?**  
If so, how?

## Sustainability of programmes, activities and outcomes

Have you considered the following:

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- ▶ **Have you thought about what will happen when funding ends?**  
What expectations do you have?

If you do not know now, when will you have a definite answer?

Who will lead on this – you or individual projects?

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- ▶ **Have you thought about what you want your participants to do after their involvement ends?**

What is a 'successful' outcome?

How will you track participants to see if that benefit is sustained?

### **Agreed understanding**

Have you considered the following:

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- ▶ **Have you documented your answers to all of these questions?**

Have all involved come to an agreed understanding?

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- ▶ **Will you ensure that those running projects share that understanding?**

If so, how?



## Box 1: The inclusion spectrum model

Managing targeted or wider provision at programme and project levels is often challenging. One way of viewing this complex issue is the inclusion spectrum, which is an approach to including young people who have different abilities and needs, and offers different but complementary ways of including everyone. Although this model was designed primarily for use by activity providers, it offers a useful representation of a number of options for dealing with targeted or generalised provision practice.

### Box 1

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Open</b>     | All young people participate and activities are not adapted or modified for a particular target group.  |
| <b>Modified</b> | All young people participate but activities are delivered flexibly by adapting or modifying.  |
| <b>Parallel</b> | All young people take part in activities but different groups do different things. Groups are organised according to different abilities or needs and activities are undertaken in different ways or at different levels. |
| <b>Separate</b> | Target group young people take part in separate activities from non-target group peers.   |
| <b>Mixed</b>    | Non-target group young people participate in target group activities.   |

The concept and table are adapted from: Winnick, J.P. (1987). 'Integration continuum for sport participation', *Adapted Physical Education Quarterly*, 4, 157-161.

For further information about our work and the studies that led us to develop this leaflet, please visit the evaluation and research pages of our website: [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/evaluationandresearch-uk.htm](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/evaluationandresearch-uk.htm) or email us at: [e&r@biglotteryfund.org.uk](mailto:e&r@biglotteryfund.org.uk)

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