

Detached Youth Work Guidelines

Introduction

These guidelines aim to provide a structure for refreshing/revisiting detached and outreach youth work in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidelines form part of YouthLink Scotland's wider COVID-19 response which can be found here:

<https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/covid-19-guidance/>

The guidelines are designed to be accessible to all members of staff and volunteers working in the wide range of settings that outreach and detached work cover.

Wherever possible these guidelines are shaped by the nature and purpose of youth work, linked to approaches and skills needed to meet youth work outcomes, National Occupational Standards for Youth Work, Values, Ethics and Competencies for Community Learning and Development (CLD).

These guidelines recognise that outreach and detached youth work practice will vary in each locality and each organisation and that each partner will refresh/develop practice in line with these variables and their own organisational policy requirements.

The guidelines will be launched with a short package of digital-first training giving practitioners and managers an opportunity to engage in peer learning and development. There will also be an open source online collection of resources, guides and background reading published alongside the guidelines in the form of a padlet which can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/3hFi5QT>

The principles of this checklist are:

- The pitch and level expected is one of awareness-raising. There is an expectation that practitioners will do further work tailoring their approach to their specific requirements
- The content should be adapted to your organisation requirements and the nature of the young people you work with.

Context

Detached youth work can be defined as:

A model of youth work practice targeted at young people on their territory (streets, parks, open and shared public spaces). Participation is voluntary and engagement is on the terms of the young people. It begins from where young people are in terms of their values, attitudes, issues and ambitions and is concerned with their personal, social and educational development.

It is characterised by a wide range of purposeful and intentional interactions between youth workers and young people and guided by youth work outcomes.

Outreach youth work can be defined as:

Youth work practice that is concerned with guiding young people to existing towards organised youth-focused services which are generally available elsewhere in the community i.e. community facility.

Whilst it can and does take place on the young people's own territory, it can also include work in existing community, multi-agency or education facilities.

Outreach work is characterised by a wide range of purposeful and intentional interactions between youth workers and young people and guided by youth work outcomes. Additionally, it can involve making contact, sharing information on services and extending an invitation to engage in organised groups / settings designed with them in mind.

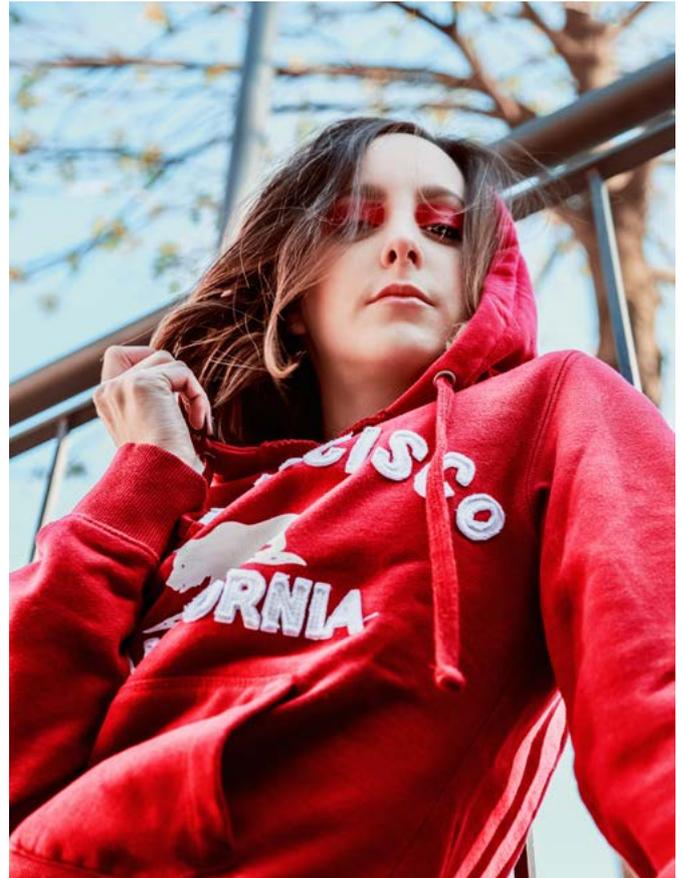
The aims of detached youth work are defined as¹:

- To make contact and be available to young people in the settings of their choosing
- To work with young people through programmes of personal and social education, which help them gain knowledge and recognise new opportunities in the world around them
- To build effective and meaningful relationships with young people through regular contact, mutual trust, respect and understanding
- To identify and respond to the needs and agendas of individuals and groups of young people by developing appropriate strategies for action which are both educational and fun
- To support and challenge young people's attitudes and action towards issues such as unemployment, drugs, poverty, racism, sexism, disability, health, sexuality, criminality, peer, parental and community pressure
- To enable young people to take more control over their lives and create experiences with them which enable them to make informed choices
- To support appropriate action that young people take resulting from their own ideas and suggestions
- To bridge the gaps in understanding between the local community and young people
- To highlight issues affecting young people and act as advocates for and with them within the wider community and world.

The detached and outreach Youth Work process guidelines²:

The level of involvement and the time allowed for each phase will vary depending on the individual agency, type of work and experience profile of the staff/volunteers involved. The process is cyclical and does not always operate in strict order in practice.

- Preparation/exploration
- Initial contact
- Building relationships
- Intervention and Development Work
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Moving on



¹Burgess, M. Burgess, I. (2006) *Don't shoot! I'm a detached Youth Worker*. Lyme Regis: RHP.

²Adapted from the detached Youth Work process outlined by The Detached Youth Workers federation.



Guidelines:

Area of consideration	Specific areas to consider.
<p>Preparation and exploration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provider workers with operations focused refresher training - Clear instructions on mitigating, managing, reporting and responding to risk through a worker and young person risk assessment and out of hours procedures - Planning models. We suggest Using the LEAP model and plan alongside young people where possible. http://www.planandevaluate.com/leap-approach/ - Identify local community planning partners (Local Youth Work Partners / CLD dept. etc.) and police to work with and share planning/intelligence and findings to ensure a spread of resources / skills and coverage - Worker resources. ID cards, uniforms, adequate PPE (weather and covid19 related), first aid kit and mobile technology - Ensure organisational Child Protection and safeguarding , insurance, health and safety and policy compliance - Strict adherence to Scottish Government Covid19 stages guidance.
<p>Initial contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A desk-based, detailed mapping of the geographical areas to be worked in must be completed ahead of work commencing - Defining nature and purpose of work. What do we want to achieve? Links to organisational and National Youth Work Outcomes - Workers must gather local intelligence to ascertain when it is safe/ appropriate to approach young people on their terms and be aware of local tensions/issues - Workers should have a clear personal and project introduction prepared for initial contact with young people and have information to share / signpost so contact can be maintained / young people can get in touch / know when detached staff will be around next - There must be consistency where possible as relationships and trust can take time to build - Please respect young people’s right not to engage and take your lead from them - When engaging with young people it is crucial to talk to young people about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What they think about key local and national issues o What their interests are? o What is challenging them and what they’d like to see happen. - Workers must be honest with young people about what can be achieved and the confidentiality and professional boundaries that apply - All information sharing / signposting / data collection must be COVID compliant i.e. digital or if physical, single-use only (pens etc.).

<p>Building relationships and development work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationships are the currency of youth work. Time must be taken to develop relationships through conversation and the building of trust, respect, and mutual interest - Workers must understand their rules of engagement around use of alcohol, drugs and anti-social behavioural and the informal learning / harm reduction approaches that can be deployed and the different types of support that can be given directly or by other community partners - Engaging in reflective practice with young people where the purpose and nature of the youth work delivered can include but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Information – sharing knowledge o Advocacy – helping young people develop and share their voice / opinions to influence local provision o Participation – helping young people find a place in their community where they can actively participate o Group work – work collectively as a group on a task or activity o Informal education – engage in conversation where informal and incidental learning can occur - Relationships with groups to reviewed regularly and should be based on the implicit or explicit needs of young people.
<p>Monitoring and evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use both qualitative and quantitative methods to measure interactions and exchanges. (i.e. numbers, location, environmental and behavioural observations, content of conversations, little wins, challenges and actions to taken forward) - Commit to reflective practice. (i.e. What have we learned? What might we change next time and why? Are we meeting aims and purpose and how do we know this?) - Link monitoring and evaluation results into LEAP planning process - Information should be recorded respectfully. Only record what you would be happy for young people to read - Make young people aware of what you are recording and why - Have clear and explicit plans for handling sensitive conversations and potential disclosure situations.
<p>Moving on</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Like all relationships, detached / outreach youth work relationships change over time. It's important to navigate these endings sensitively - Wherever possible workers must explain to young people what is changing and why - Further sources of help, support and guidance can be provided where possible /appropriate.

Support for training for your organisation:

If you need any help with delivering training or finding resources on these themes please contact YouthLink Scotland for support and signposting to existing resources.

If you don't have some of the organisational policies e.g. child protection in your own organisation we recommend you contact Youth Scotland.

Contact: info@youthlinkscotland.org

Additional practice development and training options:

YouthLink Scotland open source Padlet: <https://bit.ly/3hFi5QT>



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