Our Vision

To ensure that young people in Merton receive the opportunities they need for their personal and social development and well being so that they know and achieve their aspirations and to enable them to have an influence on the development of services and a voice in the communities and neighbourhoods in which they live.

What is Youth Work?

Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities, which in most cases combine enjoyment, challenge and learning. Youth workers work with young people aged between 11 and 25, particularly those aged between 13 and 19. Youth work is characterised by a particular combination of purpose, values and method:

Purpose: To enable young people to achieve outcomes related to their personal and social development which are represented in the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework

Values: The 12 values of youth work as presented on the opposite page

Methods: Through the relationship with skilled and trusted adults young people learn, reflect and develop and achieve their desired outcomes

Youth work is unique as it combines working with young people individually, in groups including peer groups and involving them in positive activities and in many cases working with their family, school and other agencies.

Youth Work Values

- Youth Work is based on the relationship of trust and confidence between the young person and adult which can transform what is possible for young people;
- Young people choose to be involved, not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun;
- The work starts where the young people are - with their view of the world and their interests;
- It seeks to go beyond where young people start, in particular by encouraging them to be critical and creative in their responses to their experiences and the world around them and supporting their exploration of the new ideas, interests and creative ability;
- It takes place because young people are young people, not because they have been labelled or categorised as deviant;
- It recognises, respects and is actively responsive to the wider networks of peers, family, communities and cultures, which are important to young people;
- Through these networks it seeks to help young people achieve stronger relationships and identities;
- It is concerned with facilitating and empowering the voice of young people.
- It is concerned with ensuring young people can influence the environment in which they live;
- It respects and values individual differences by supporting and strengthening young people’s belief in themselves and their capacity to grow and change;
- It works with schools and other agencies which contribute to young people’s social and personal development;
- It complements and supports school and college education by encouraging and providing other opportunities for young people to achieve and fulfil their potential;
Why have a Curriculum for youth work

In order to make sure that the Youth Service works towards achieving its vision it needs to have plans, programmes and assessment processes in place in order to provide the experiences, challenges and opportunities, which successfully assist young people to achieve their desired outcomes.

What is the Youth Service Curriculum?

The totality of the experiences, opportunities and challenges which are provided for young people by Merton Youth Service and its partners to implement the Vision. In order to ensure that this range and diversity of learning opportunities achieves this purpose and produces the best outcomes for young people the youth work process with its five key aspects MUST take place, which are:

- The context (location, activities and youth workers) through which youth workers build relationships and gain the trust and confidence of young people;
- The learning which is to take place which is derived from the wants, needs, interests and agendas of young people;
- The methods by which youth worker with young people plan for the learning to take place;
- The learning experience (by using the current programme or including new opportunities) which would usually include enjoyment, challenge and learning;
- The assessment of the learning or progress which has taken place and the outcome for young people;

Participation Promise to Merton’s Children and Young People

The Youth Service is committed to implementing the Promise wherever and whenever it can in all aspects of the Youth Service.
Outcomes for young people

As a result of their unique involvement in Merton Youth Service every participating young person should be making progress in their personal and social development towards one or more of the Every Child Matters Five Outcomes ECMO

1. To be healthier
2. To be safer
3. To have opportunities which they have enjoyed and through which they have achieved
4. To be making a positive contribution to their centre and/or their community
5. To have made progress towards their future economic well being

We have identified the most common 25 indicators of need of young people in Merton by using the ECM five outcomes framework. They are represented in the Pizza model in the centre pages of this framework. They are the basis of the My Welcome needs assessment, planning and evaluation process, which is used throughout the Youth Service.
Planning

There needs to be a planning system in place so that the wants, needs and issues of young people are known and responded to at all levels from the individual youth worker, to the once a week session and up to the Whole Service. To this effect Merton Youth Service has the following planning system:

At whole Service level an annual Youth Service Team Plan derived from the Children and Young people Plan, the strategic assessments of the needs of young people and the needs of young people made known to the Youth Service through My Welcome and other assessment tools in use within the Youth Service.

At Centre /Project level termly and session plans based on the wants, needs, interests and issues of the participating young people, individual project plans of youth workers, the Youth Service Team Plan and Children and Young People Plan.

At individual youth worker level a project plan for a target group and/ or individual young people responding to their wants, needs, interests and issues at roughly termly intervals.

Assessing the progress of young people

the distance travelled;

the next rung up the ladder;

the increase in awareness, knowledge or understanding;

the change in thinking, behaviour or attitude;

increase in confidence or self esteem;

the progress they have made, however small, but which is meaningful to them;

accreditation, awards, qualifications;

what the young person has done which they have not or could not do before;

the skills and abilities which young people have acquired;

new activity skills;

what young people can do better than before;

barriers which have been overcome;

and others……..

This assessment of progress of individual or groups of young people is undertaken as part of debrief at the end of sessions, My Welcome follow up conversations and project evaluations.
Assessing the quality of youth work

| Level 0 |
The youth workers know very little about the young people and do not have the trust or confidence of the young people; young people do not engage but only hang around and may be disruptive and/or disrespectful.

| Level 1 |
Youth workers getting to know the young people and beginning to gain their trust and confidence; young people are taking part and engaging but are very dependent on youth workers, young people behave with respect most of the time.

| Level 2 |
The wants, needs, interests and issues of young people are shared and identified between young people and youth workers, young people are comfortable, feel appreciated and enjoy their contact with youth workers and are making new social relationships and show respect for each other and youth workers.

| Level 3 |
Level 2 plus
Youth workers are meeting the wants and needs of young people and responding to their interests and issues, young people are learning and enjoy their participation

| Level 4 |
Level 3 plus
Young people sharing responsibility with youth workers and take part in organising activities and contributing to decision making

| Level 5 |
Level 4 plus
Young People have been empowered by youth workers to take the lead, they organise activities for themselves and others, they pass on their skills to other young people, they take full responsibility, and have little dependence on youth workers

This assessment is undertaken as part of debrief at the end of sessions and project evaluations

What is Merton Youth Service?

Merton Youth Service is one of the services within the Children, Schools and Families Department of Merton Council. The Service provides youth work opportunities for young people aged 11 to 25 with a priority aged 13 to 19 anywhere in the borough. It is both available to any young person who lives or is educated or works in Merton and who may wish to participate, but it is also a targeted service for young people in need. It is committed to community cohesion and working in partnership with other services. If offers youth work opportunities in a very diverse range of contexts including:

- Youth centres,
- on the street and in the parks through detached work;
- in the homes, school and community of young people through outreach and key work,
- on residential and outings to an unlimited variety of destinations;
- in advice centres;
- key work with young people in need
- Youth parliament, consultations, funding panels;
- opportunities for young people to volunteer and have work or enterprise experience
- schools, and community and leisure centres;

The management structure is devised to enable the provision of youth work to take place and to ensure that it is complementary to the work of other services and implements Council priorities.