

Appendix 1

What is targeted youth support?

Targeted youth support aims to ensure that the needs of vulnerable teenagers are identified early and met by agencies working together effectively – in ways that are shaped by the views and experiences of young people themselves. There are seven key elements of targeted youth support:



Strengthening the influence of vulnerable young people, and their families and communities, and their ability to bring about positive change



Identifying vulnerable young people early, in the context of their everyday lives



Building a clear picture of individual needs, shared by young people and the agencies working with them, using the common assessment framework (CAF)



Enabling vulnerable young people to receive early support in universal settings. Help all agencies to draw in extra help on behalf of young people, through better links with other agencies and organisations



Ensuring vulnerable young people receive a personalised package of support, information, advice and guidance, and learning and development opportunities, with support for their parents or carers as appropriate. This should be coordinated by a trusted lead professional and delivered by agencies working well together



Providing support for vulnerable young people across transitions, for example moving on from school or from the support of one service to another as needs change



Making services more accessible, attractive and relevant for vulnerable young people

Targeted youth support reforms build on the changes already under way in young people's services (for example, in response to the aims of Every Child Matters), by drawing them together into a coherent whole designed for, and largely shaped by, vulnerable young people and their families and carers.

“The trick is to see links across all the Every Child Matters components alongside a commitment to prevention.”

Keith Moore, director for children and young people and targeted youth support pathfinder sponsor, Gateshead

Who is targeted youth support for?

A central aim of targeted youth support is to help vulnerable young people early, to address their difficulties as soon as possible and prevent their problems escalating. This often means working with young people who may not meet traditional thresholds for statutory or specialist services, but who, without help, are at future risk of further problems such as substance misuse, youth offending, teenage pregnancy and homelessness.

In particular, this is likely to include young people who experience a combination of the factors below:

- ▶ Persistent absence or exclusion from school
- ▶ Behavioural problems
- ▶ Poor emotional, social or coping skills
- ▶ Poor mental health
- ▶ Learning difficulties and disabilities
- ▶ Low self-efficacy
- ▶ Poor aspirations
- ▶ Attitudes which condone risky behaviours
- ▶ Poor family support, family conflict or problems such as parental substance misuse
- ▶ Poor support networks
- ▶ Family or friends, or involvement in gangs, who condone high risk activities
- ▶ Living in a deprived neighbourhood
- ▶ Poverty

Appendix 1

“Targeted youth support is helping to establish a new system targeted at at-risk children and young people within universal services and reduce the chances of them slipping through the net.”

Jo Baker, operations director of Connexions and targeted youth support pathfinder change team member, Nottinghamshire

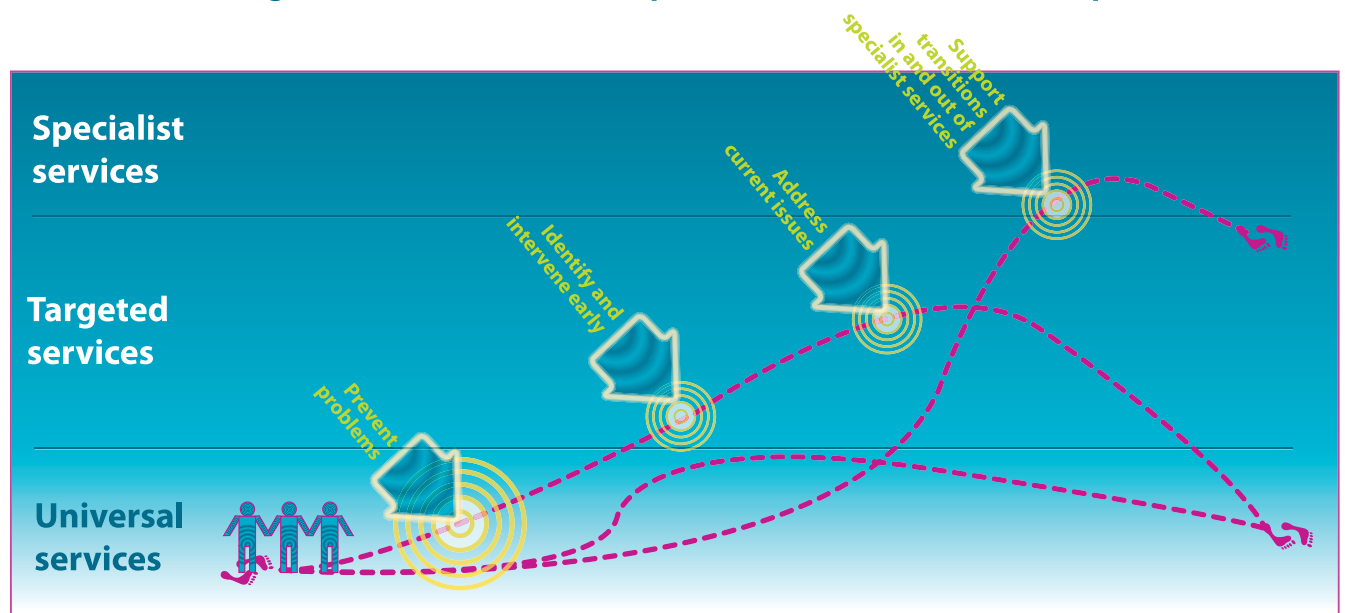
While early intervention is vitally important, a significant minority of teenagers are already experiencing more entrenched problems, for example homelessness, substance misuse, problems leading to entry into care, youth offending and teenage parenthood, which themselves can lead to further need.

Targeted youth support should help ensure the needs of these young people are identified and met, and should dovetail with (and, as necessary, complement) the specialist or statutory provision they may already be receiving or entitled to receive. Whenever appropriate, targeted youth support should help these young people to settle back into and thrive in universal settings as soon as possible, avoiding a spiralling of need.

“We’re just starting to understand what is needed to provide an integrated approach to prevention. Targeted youth support is helping us to achieve this integration by breaking down the demarcation between universal and specialist services.”

Phil Bennett, youth offending service manager and pathfinder change team lead, South Tyneside

The focus is on targeted services, but with important links to universal and specialist services



Example: young people’s life journeys

Appendix 1

What are the intended outcomes for young people?

Targeted youth support aims to help vulnerable young people achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

Effective targeted youth support addresses the risk factors that may result in poor outcomes and helps build vulnerable young people's resilience. In particular, it aims to:

- ▶ Develop young people's social and emotional skills, enabling them to make positive choices, manage change and navigate risk
- ▶ Raise young people's aspirations and help them to achieve and feel positive towards learning. This includes helping them to be engaged, and stay engaged, in the wider range of learning opportunities becoming available for 14–19 year-olds
- ▶ Help foster supportive and positive families, communities and peer groups

Addressing risk factors and building the resilience of young people can help avert and address a range of problems, including:

- ▶ Youth offending/anti-social behaviour
- ▶ Drug or alcohol misuse
- ▶ Under-18 conceptions and poor sexual health
- ▶ Poor outcomes for teenage parents and their children
- ▶ 16–18 year-olds not in education, employment and training
- ▶ Low attainment
- ▶ Running away and youth homelessness
- ▶ Poor mental health
- ▶ Entry into care



Case study – Knowsley pathfinder

One of the critical issues identified by the targeted youth support pathfinder in Knowsley was the need to develop working partnerships between services to ensure support for young people is as holistic and effective as possible – in order to reduce risk factors and improve resilience factors that protect young people from negative outcomes.

The risk and resilience project team is taking forward the strands of work that underpin this: transition, mental resilience of individuals, mental health awareness, health promotion, support for parents and families and working with the hard to reach.

Appendix 1

What is the age focus of targeted youth support?

While the primary focus of targeted youth support is on vulnerable teenagers, improving outcomes for this group also often depends on children receiving effective support at an earlier age.

This can only be achieved through the full range of Every Child Matters initiatives being planned and delivered in a coordinated way to ensure vulnerable children and families are identified and supported early in life. Sure Start Children's Centres and schools, through extended services in and around schools, are essential to this.

Many of the pathfinders have used the targeted youth support change process to reform services across the 0–19 age range.

Case study – Hampshire pathfinder

To ensure personalised and coordinated support from 0 to 19, the targeted youth support pathfinder in Hampshire is establishing a district-based strategy group for 0–19 year-olds and a single multi-function Every Child Matters panel for 0–19 year-olds (in three groups: 0–7, 8–12 and 13–19). This replaces a range of existing early intervention panels for individuals. It will provide young people with a single point of entry to a wide range of services that will, through a lead professional, provide a coordinated package of support.

Why reform targeted youth support?

During the last decade a growing number of government, community and voluntary sector initiatives have targeted vulnerable young people. Operating under different funding regimes, incentive structures and delivery chains, these initiatives have often developed independently, sometimes targeting the same populations of young people without full coordination and sometimes lacking a remit for prevention or without strong links to universal services such as schools or health.

However, there are important examples of programmes helping to join up services and prevent the difficulties of vulnerable young people becoming worse. These include Connexions, the young people's development programme (YPDP), positive activities for young people (PAYP), positive futures, preventative programmes led by youth offending teams (YOT), and local authority/primary care trust (PCT) teenage pregnancy strategies (further details about some of these initiatives are outlined in appendix 1).

Voluntary and community sector organisations, in particular, have substantial experience and expertise in engaging and supporting vulnerable young people.

Targeted youth support reform builds on the best of existing targeted services and good practice and brings coherence to the planning, commissioning and delivery of services for vulnerable teenagers. This helps increase consistency and understanding across agencies, reduce duplication and identify gaps. This improves both outcomes for young people and their experience of using services.

“The targeted youth support change process brought existing multi-agency teams together and created a real sense of coherence – it gave us massive gains in terms of our engagement with young people.”

Mike Smith, assistant director community strategy and targeted youth support pathfinder sponsor, Southwark

Appendix 1

The momentum of the wider reform currently taking place across the system for young people is considerable, including:

- ▶ The establishment of children's trusts and new scope for integrated planning, commissioning and delivery
- ▶ Greater choice of learning opportunities at 14–19
- ▶ New standards in information, advice and guidance and a statutory duty on local authorities to secure access to sufficient positive activities for young people
- ▶ The establishment of supporting parenting strategies in local areas and a new duty on local authorities to provide comprehensive information on local services for parents of children and young people up to the age of 20
- ▶ Greater prioritisation of early intervention and prevention across a range of specialist and statutory services, including housing and services for children in care
- ▶ Extended services in and around schools – offering an unprecedented opportunity for targeted youth support services to work in and with schools to establish the frontline for a whole-system approach to prevention and early intervention

With the right services engaged, the right links in place and an ambitious vision, targeted youth support can provide the lynchpin for vulnerable young people, helping them to benefit from the new opportunities and support available.

