



Youth Work a handbook

Southwark Diocese



The Diocese of
Southwark

C Children
Y and Youth
D Development
G Group

Youth Work a handbook

Southwark Diocese

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Introduction

Why are you doing Youth Work? Seriously, what is the point? Does it really change anyone?

Does it genuinely have an impact on young people? Wouldn't they arrive at pretty much the same place with or without it?

After all there never used to be youth workers and society didn't fall apart. The Church was apparently thriving better then than now, even though the problems confronted and created by young people don't seem to have changed much down the centuries...

"I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words... When I was young, we were taught to be respectful of our elders, but today's young people are exceedingly disrespectful and impatient of restraint"

Hesiod (8th century BC)

If you're not sure about the answers to these questions this book is for you.

If you are convinced that the answer to these questions is an unequivocal 'YES' – yes, youth work can change lives and destinies of young people and alter the future of the Church and of society, then it is definitely for you.

And if you haven't asked yourself those questions, or don't regularly ask them of yourself and your colleagues, then you have to read it.

This Youth Work Handbook is for professional youth workers, volunteers and clergy alike. In fact, it is for all those who work with young people, want to work with young people, or manage people who do.

It is not an exhaustive guide of what to do in specific situations. Equally, it is not a collection of ideas that might have worked for us but, by the time they reach you, are so stale you wonder how they could ever have worked for anyone.

It is intended to be more like the Lord's Prayer and less like Chairman Mao's Little Red Book. It is a concise index of subjects designed to stimulate your own reflection, provide some checklists and point you towards other suitable resources. The various sections of the book address some of the main issues relating to: individual work, group work, team work, church structures, involving young people and reflective practice.

Nobody can tell you why you do youth work and no book can explain fully how to do youth work, but this book might help you ask, 'How is our Youth Work doing?' and highlight which questions need to be posed for it to be done better still...

'Youth Work changed my life'

Melvyn Bragg

What is the CYDG?

'I believe what really happens in history is this: the old man is always wrong; and the young people are always wrong about what is wrong with him. The practical form it takes is this: that, while the old man may stand by some stupid custom, the young man always attacks it with some theory that turns out to be equally stupid.'

G. K. Chesterton

Chaired by Canon Tim Marwood and made up of representatives from each Episcopal Area and co-options, CYDG monitors work with Children and Young people in the diocese and is responsible for setting Diocesan policy in this area. CYDG acts as a resource for those engaged in work with Children and Young People. It is accountable to the Bishop's Council.

CYDG AIMS TO:

- Train, equip, resource and inspire those working with children and young people in ways that will enable them to grow in their relationship with God
- encourage churches to be inclusive of children and young people, nurturing their dynamic participation in church life and service
- support, encourage and participate in the development of creative and appropriate expressions of church that engage with children and young people

It seeks to do this in many ways but primarily by arranging events and training days for those involved in this work, or those with interest in it, and offering access to advice and resources.

Contacts

The Research and Administrative Officer runs an enquiries service which will point you in the direction of what you are looking for, or to somebody who can help. You can access the service by emailing Caroline Gibson or by phoning 020 7939 9412

What is Youth Work?

'The glory of God is a human being fully alive.'

St Irenaeus

It is, of course, impossible to define youth work. And it would probably be a dangerously constricting practice anyway. There is, however, much to be learnt from the attempts that have been made over the years. Here are a few:

'Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society through activities that combine enjoyment, challenge, learning and achievement. It is a developmental process that starts in places and at times when young people themselves are ready to engage, learn and make use of it. The relationship between youth worker and young person is central to this process.'

National Youth Agency (2007)

'enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential'

National Occupational Standards for Youth Work (2008)

'[Youth Work entails] enabling young people to achieve their full potential, in the company of people of faith, by:

- Creating an environment where that can happen.
- Developing a sense of identity.
- Enabling young people to make choices and influence their world.
- Making disciples of those who have begun a journey of Christian commitment.'

Methodist Association of Youth Clubs

'Youth work is the creation of conditions and activities which facilitate the development of young people and enable them to be active outside their families, curricula and work on the basis of their free will. The content of youth work is the social, cultural and health education of young people which promotes the mental and physical development of young people.'

Estonian Ministry of Education, Conception of Estonian Youth Work (2001)

The aims of youth work in an Anglican context include:

- 'To enable young people to have a deeper and richer experience of worshipping God in an Anglican context.
- To encourage young people to become innovative and creative thinkers and leaders by equipping them with leadership skills encompassed within a Christian framework.
- To secure a stronger representative voice for young people in National Church Institutions.
- To train and equip young people as partners in mission and evangelism to their peers and community and create opportunities for this, including sharing their faith with their peers, with children, and indeed with adults.'

The Church of England's National Youth Strategy (2002)

Youth work in the U.K can claim to have its roots in the work of the Church. Hannah More could well be the first documented youth worker and her programmes of elementary education, religious instruction, industrial and domestic training, and social welfare in the 1790's openly carried the 'supreme aim of making Christians'. But the church's work with young people happens in the context of many differing opinions as to the most appropriate motivations and methodologies.

The key question is not "What is Youth Work?" but rather "What kind of Youth Work are we seeking to do?"

Some aspects to consider might include:

Age Range

Which age ranges do you want to work with? 13-19? Secondary-School Age? 11-25? Students?

We should no more expect the same youth worker to be able to work effectively with 9 year olds, 14 year olds and 19 year olds than we would expect a Primary School Teacher to be equipped to work at University, or a University Lecturer to teach in a Secondary School.

The Government seeks to make Youth Service provision available to 'all young people in the target age range 13–19, and to targeted groups in the 11–13 and 19–25 age ranges'.

What is the age range of the Youth Work you are running, or hoping to run? Is it too narrow? Is it too broad?

Context

Are you looking to create a space where young people choose to come – a youth club, or a drop-in centre?

What is the venue and how does it shape their expectations? What is possible to offer in the venue?

Will the young people be coming to formal sessions? Will the content of these be clearly advertised? Or are the young people simply coming to 'hang out' with Youth Workers in attendance?

Can these two elements be combined? Or mixed? What are the dangers of combining these elements? Equally, what are the possible advantages?

Are you looking to go to the young people where they are? To provide detached youth workers who seek out encounters with local young people in their own communities? If you are what additional safeguards need to be in place for your workers and the young people you are working with?

Content

What are the needs you are hoping to meet?

Is your youth work presentational? Do you want to teach or communicate specific things? If so, what are they and how are they best communicated; in a classroom environment, small group discussions and/or across a meal table?

Or is the work more relational? In which case what boundaries do you need to have in place? How will you measure success? Can you? Do you need to?

Mission Statements

What is the aim of your youth work? 'Making Christians', like Hannah More. Or 'enabling young people to achieve their full potential' like the MAYC? Can it be both? Is it 'missional'? If so, in what way? Is it part of God's mission? How?

'The more clearly we can specify the ends, the better we will be able to choose the means for achieving them'.

Department for Education and Skills (2002)

What is the Role of a Youth Worker?

When you take on this role, you also take on responsibilities which will affect how you relate to people you work with, and how you keep boundaries with your personal life. This is for your own protection as well as that of others. These are some of the things to consider:

- You are a role model – young people will look up to you, copy your behaviour, and take your advice
- You are acting in the place of their parents and carers when young people are in your care – with all the responsibilities that good parenting requires; but you are not replacing parents
- You are not their friend – you will need to keep boundaries to ensure you are not seen that way, whilst at the same time remaining approachable and accessible
- You will need to keep yourself and others safe, and work within the law
- You will need to recognise the limits of your role and expertise, and know when to seek advice and refer someone elsewhere
- You will need to work closely with others – officers in the church, other youth and children's workers, parents and carers, local community officers, and more
- You will need to keep yourself informed and up to date about practice – this includes making sure you are properly supervised, and doing regular training.

What makes a good Youth Worker?

'No matter what their backgrounds and circumstances...the 1000-plus young people who participated in our research had a consistent list of ideal qualities for their youth workers: caring, fun, helpful, patient, respectful, smart, trustworthy, and open-minded. The words "easy," "soft", "casual", and "lenient", didn't show up anywhere. Nor did we find a single reference to physical appearance'.

Foellinger Foundation

Youth work is a vocation. It is a role that requires, of its volunteers and professionals alike, more than simply the willingness to do it. It asks questions of those who participate in it. One of the key qualities of a good youth worker is that they pause to hear those questions, and seek to develop fuller answers to them.

What are the attributes that you consider non-negotiable in a youth worker?

- A sense of calling?
- Self Awareness?
- A commitment to personal development; professionally, spiritually?

How often do you reflect on these aspects of your work, or the work of those you manage or oversee in youth work? How are these aspects they cultivated?

We asked youth work providers in Southwark for the core competencies they were looking for in their workers. Here are some of the common denominators:

As you read through the list consider if you are developing in these areas? If you are a manager, how are you helping your youth worker(s) to develop in these areas?

1. Theoretical or Theological Understanding

- Adolescent Psychological Development
- Learning Styles
- Missiological Perspectives
- Stages of Faith
- Spiritual development
- Liturgy

2. Legal Requirements

- Health and Safety, through Risk Assessment; Fire Risk Assessment; First Aid
- Safeguarding children and young people
- Equal Opportunities
- Employment Law
- Current Diocesan and National Policies and Canon Law

3. Understanding Contemporary Issues

- Drugs and alcohol
- Self Harm
- Eating Disorders
- Crime and Violence
- Sexual Health

4. Pedagogy

- Public Speaking
- Story Telling
- Effective 'Classroom' Management
- Working with Behavioural Difficulties
- Effective Small Group Facilitation
- Effective Teaching Practices
- Differentiated Teaching and Learning
- Informal Education
- Mentoring

5. People skills

- Conflict Management
- Personal Presentation
- Interpersonal Skills
- Working with Parents, Teachers, Social Services, Fellow Professionals – (going beyond being 'good at relating to Young People')
- Working with Volunteers
- Counselling
- Confidentiality

6. Professional dispositions

- Respect for Diversity
- Reflective Practice
- Collaboration
- Working in a Team
- Able to set and maintain boundaries
- Being accountable
- Strategy, Target Setting, Monitoring and Evaluating

7. Personal Spirituality

What sort of support structures do you have? Where do you go to learn? Who offers you accountability or spiritual direction? How are you doing 'spiritually'?

'Ok – it's important to ask what makes a good youth worker. But what is distinctive about a good Christian youth worker?'

Alex, A Youth Worker

Again, are you developing in these areas? What are you doing to develop in these areas? If you are a manager, or a church leader, how are helping your youth worker(s) to develop in these areas? What is most important in this list? Equally, what do you think is missing from the list?

For information, resources and training providers, see the CYDG Section of the Website or contact the helpline 020 7939 0412, caroline.gibson@southwark.anglican.org

Young People

'The teenager is a uniquely human phenomenon. Adolescents are known to be moody, insecure, argumentative, angst-ridden, impulsive, impressionable, reckless and rebellious. Teenagers are also characterised by odd sleeping patterns, awkward growth spurts, bullying, acne and slobbish behaviour. So what could be the possible benefit of the teenage phase? Most other animals ... skip that stage altogether, developing rapidly from infancy to full adulthood. Humans, in contrast, have a very puzzling four-year gap between sexual maturity and prime reproductive age.'

John Pickrell, New Scientist (2006)

There is no shortage of theories as to what defines 'the youth of today'. In recent decades, the treacherous borderlands between childhood and being, or considering yourself to be, an adult member of society, has become a country in its own right. What do you know about the maps already made? How do you help young people navigate it? Some of the paths and landmarks worth noting include:

Identity

What is shaping the identity of the young people in your community?
How are they encouraged to explore and express their sense of self, and 'the other'?
How do they see themselves? Have you asked them what they consider 'youth' to be about?

Decision Making

What is informing their choices? How are they being equipped to better understand the multiple influences that affect their image of themselves? Is the task of youth worker to guide a young person's decisions or inform their choices?

Culture

Which cultures are the young people part of or adjacent to? What tools do they have to critique what is passed on to them 'as a given' by their culture? How can they become responsible custodians of both the past and the future?

Faith

What is the difference between a Christian basis for self-esteem and respect for others and a secular one? Are there differences? How does Jesus' model of 'denying ourselves' impact any discussion of self-worth? Does it? Should it? How do we help young people engage with the traditions they inherit from older generations of believers and think critically about them?

If 'youth' is another country and they do things differently there, how do you encourage adult guides to venture into it and protect its inhabitants from dangers within and without? And, is youth work primarily about protection? What happens to it if its main focus becomes keeping young people safe?

'The deepest definition of youth is life as yet untouched by tragedy.'

Alfred North Whitehead.

Working with Individuals

‘Contrary to some simplifications, young people are neither small adults, nor large children. Youth are in a unique stage of life and they have unique needs.’

Dr Paul Martiquet, Medical Health Officer

The core of most youth work remains the developing and maintaining of healthy relationships with young people. What is the nature of these relationships? How long are you expecting them to last? As a trustworthy adult, which things in these relationships do you consider are your responsibility?

Boundaries

It is funny how our understanding of being protected changes in different contexts. There are very few who would risk bee-keeping or space travel without having carefully checked the suits and seals that keep them safe. In recent years our understanding of new dangers – skin cancer, sexually transmitted diseases – has led to new forms of caution. But strangely, in our interactions with other human beings, we are still prone to the twin errors of being too defensive or too cavalier.

A good sense of your own boundaries - your areas of greatest vulnerability, the tension between protection and flexibility – and a clear understanding of the need to protect others, will help you avoid the equally menacing extremes of playing with fire or driving in oven gloves...

What distinguishes your relationship with a young person from a friendship with a peer? Do you know the difference? Do they?

What boundaries have you put in place to ensure the young people you work with are safe? What boundaries have you put in place to ensure your own protection; from confusion, from exhaustion, from accusation?

Do you have agreed boundaries for your young people, and volunteers? What procedures will you follow if these are broken?

How do you greet young people? What impression do you want to give? How would you interact differently with them if you encountered them outside of a work context? Where does a ‘work’ context begin and end for a youth worker?

Do you have a clear policy to address the following?

Your PCC is legally bound to adopt and follow the following policies and procedures:

- A Safe Church: Diocesan Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for safeguarding children, safeguarding adults who may be vulnerable, and responding to domestic abuse, <http://www.southwark.anglican.org/what/diocesan-policies-procedures>
- Health and Safety, following the requirements of your church’s insurance company (usually Ecclesiastical)

- Equal Opportunities
- Data Protection
- Employment (recruitment and practice of paid staff and volunteers)
- Food and hygiene
- Insurance.

You should also have in place procedures for:

- Confidentiality and information sharing (found in A Safe Church)
- Record keeping (found in A Safe Church)
- Complaints and Grievances
- Discipline
- Transport (found in A Safe Church)
- Risk Assessment (found in A Safe Church)
- First Aid.

Keeping young people safe and protecting yourself

There are resources available to help you.

What does the Diocese of Southwark offer?

- Training – free, through CYDG and Safeguarding
- Advice and support, including out of office hours, on any safeguarding issues
- Policies and procedures which you need to follow, and how to implement them – especially on safeguarding, which should be used to guide your practice.

What can you expect from your church?

- Support and management from the Parochial Church Council – usually through a named person
- A line manager and supervisor who will meet with you routinely, and whom you can contact if you have a problem or concern
- Induction into your role at an early stage – including knowing what to do/who to contact if you need advice, or have a child protection issue or concern
- Local implementation of safeguarding, employment and other policies and procedures.

Safeguarding children and young people

There are four areas of your work in which you need to be particularly safeguarding-aware:

- In how you run activities
- In how you communicate in person, in writing, by phone and online – with children and young people, with their parents and carers, and with other professionals
- If you take young people on residential and off site activities
- When you are concerned about a young person - what counts as concern, and what to do if you receive a disclosure of abuse or observe harmful behaviour.

WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND:

- i) that you read the whole of A Safe Church, and pay particular attention to sections 4, 5 and 6, so you know what it contains and can then use it as a reference point for all your work. You can upload the disk included in the inside pocket of the folder, or download it from the website (<http://www.southwark.anglican.org/what/diocesan-policies-procedures>), to your computer, and also find a hard copy in your church.
- ii) that you book for diocesan training, which will help you to use A Safe Church, and provide you with stories and scenarios to help you put it into practice. Training focuses entirely on the church setting, which is different to other settings.
- iii) that you find out what safeguarding training your borough/local authority is offering for voluntary sector workers (both paid and employed); this will be free and provide you with local information.

- iv) that you meet with your Parish Safeguarding Officers, to find out what their role is, and how to contact them if you have any safeguarding concerns.

A SAFE CHURCH: KEY REFERENCE POINTS

This is a quick guide to the page references in A Safe Church that you need to be particularly aware of and ensure you are practising. It is not an exhaustive list.

SECTION 2: THE POLICIES –

for safeguarding children, safeguarding adults who may be vulnerable and responding to domestic abuse. In safeguarding law, any young person under the age of 18 counts as a child. Parents or carers of children may be vulnerable adults, and you may receive disclosures of domestic abuse. The child's needs are always paramount, and children may have needs or be at risk of harm through the vulnerability of their parents, or through domestic abuse in the household.

SECTION 4: KEEPING SAFE

There is no such thing as 'no risk' – but this section contains procedures and guidelines for how to create a safer environment, where risks are minimised. This may look like a list of 'do's and don'ts', but it's there so you can operate in an environment where everyone knows the rules and boundaries and can therefore feel safe – and it is there to protect you and your team, as well as young people.

In particular:

- Pay good attention to Health and Safety [page 4-1, and see paragraph below].
- Write a risk assessment for all new activities, and do routine risk assessments on regular activities [pages 4-3 to 4-5 and the form on page 10-11]
- Make sure you have the right staffing ratios for all activities [page 4-7]. There must always be at least two recruited adults; the number depends on how many young people you expect to come. Aim for a gender balance. Know what you will do if someone doesn't turn up – do you have a substitute you can call, and if not, how do you cancel the activity?
- If you are taking children or young people off site for activities, take extra safeguarding precautions [page 4-8].
- Obtain the written consent of parents or carers for all activities [form on page 10-13].
- Make sure you know arrangements for collection of children of primary-school-age, and that parents are made aware if secondary-school-age young people are being allowed to make their own way home. [page 4-8]
- Take care about physical contact with young people – a friendly hug can be misunderstood, physical games can have sexual overtones [page 4-15]
- Follow procedures for transporting young people in cars and minibuses, and obtain the consent of parents or carers [pages 4-25 to 4-28, and forms on pages 10-15 and 10-17].
- If you are taking a group of young people away on a residential trip, make sure you obtain the permission of the PCC, take extra care over risk assessment, make sure you are fully insured, communicate all details of the trip to parents, ensure you have their informed consent and more besides, follow the procedures on page 4-19.
- Take care in all your communication with children – think through how you use texts, email, Facebook etc – try to keep all communication as far as possible in the public domain, and always think how what you say may be read by a young person for whom you are a role model. Keep your own Facebook account private [page 4-29].
- If you take photos of young people, think through how you will use them and where you will store them – obtain their own and their parents' permission before you display them, including on websites or social network sites [page 4-29].

- Know what to do regarding alcohol and drugs use, page 4-37. What about your own drinking and smoking when on duty? – what counts as on duty? What do you do if you find young people using drugs or alcohol? [page 4-37].
- Know what to do if you are presented with challenging behaviour from young people during activities or at other times. Decide what behaviour is acceptable, and work out the boundaries with young people [page 4-41, and see page 27 of this Guide, Working with Behavioural Difficulties]. If the behaviour of a young person poses risk of harm to other young people or leaders, then follow procedures for Allegations and Concerns [page 6-5].
- Record all concerns or incidents factually, and keep records securely [page 4-45, and see paragraphs on Recording and Data Protection below].

SECTION 5: RECRUITING AND SUPPORTING STAFF

You may be responsible for recruiting and managing volunteer or paid youth leaders; and you yourself need to be recruited and supervised properly. Have you applied for a CRB disclosure? – have references been obtained?

Make sure all workers with young people are familiar with A Safe Church, know what to do if they have concerns, and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them – including that they are part of a team, who they are accountable to and how they can obtain support [page 5-15].

SECTION 6: ALLEGATIONS AND CONCERNS

- Know what to do if someone complains about you, or about someone else, or if other workers have a grievance [page 6-1].
- Know what to do if you are concerned about a child or young person – how to listen to a young person disclosing abuse or mistreatment, or if you observe signs of potential abuse or mistreatment. Know who you should tell immediately – and who you should not tell – and where to get further advice and refer on. [pages 6-5 to 6-9].
- Know what to do if an allegation is made against yourself, or another youth worker or person in a position of trust in the church [pages 6-11 to 6-15].
- Know what to do if a child tells you about domestic abuse [page 6-16]
- Know when something told to you in confidence has nevertheless to be passed on, with or without their consent [pages 6-17 to 6-19].

Health and Safety

They may be the two most overused words in modern English but accidents happen! You ignore safety considerations at your peril. Firstly because if anything does go wrong and you can't demonstrate that you've taken the necessary steps to prevent it then your work and all the good it can do is effectively over. And, secondly, if you seriously expected to be entrusted with the care of other people's children when you can't even take basic precautions, or be bothered with a little paperwork then you should probably reconsider your vocation. It's a handful of forms. And you probably do less paperwork than in virtually any other career! The crucial advice is to carry out routine risk assessments of all of your activities, and always to carry out a risk assessment before any new piece of work is undertaken. A tool for risk assessment can be found in A Safe Church, section 4 and section 10 for a form.

Do you have a known, trained person with up to date certification who is responsible for first aid? Do you have a first aid kit? Is it adequately stocked and does everyone know where it is kept?

Do you always have access to a telephone in case of emergencies? Have you a list of telephone numbers for the parents/guardians of the young people you work with? Do you have all the information you need from parents/guardians including dietary and medical information? Is this information accessible for all workers?

Do you have parental consent forms?

Do you have an Accident/Incident book? All accidents/incidents should be recorded in it. Do all your workers know where it is kept?

Do you work with the churchwardens in your church when they conduct their annual risk assessment of the building for safety and fire, in order to ensure consideration is given to young people, and your use of the building?

Do you have a system for recording the breakdown/repair/removal of equipment?

Do you know what you are and are not insured for? Do you have an Employer's Liability Certificate? This is legally required to be displayed in a public place – ask the churchwardens whether you are covered for all the activities you do [page 4-49].

Do your staff have appropriate qualifications to supervise young people using potentially dangerous equipment? Do you prepare any food in your work with young people – if so, you need a Basic Food Hygiene Certificate.

Fire Risk Assessment

Are fire exits clearly marked, unlocked and unobstructed? Is everyone familiar with the evacuation procedure? Do you carry out regular fire drills? Is any safety equipment you provide – such as smoke alarms, fire extinguishers etc., in good order [page 4-2]?

Recording

What were you doing on the afternoon of the 14th of last month? Or the morning of the 1st exactly two years ago? Who was there with you? What would you do if the person asking you that question was investigating an allegation of improper conduct? If you had made a record of your work with young people, one thing you would be able to do is reach for your diary and breathe a sigh of relief that you always kept a careful record of all your contact with young people.

And then there's the event that's coming up, and the planning it requires. Thank goodness your filing system means you have all last years planning, and your list of ideas/mistakes to avoid for next time. This will help you avoid having to do all that work again from scratch. You do have those records don't you?

Do you always keep a record of attendance at activities? Do you have a system for recording contact with young people? How does it fit in with confidentiality and Data Protection legislation? Bear in mind individuals can ask to see information held about them.

Data Protection

Are you aware of your responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998? Do you ensure that information you gather and hold is:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate and up to date
- not kept for longer than is necessary
- processed in line with individual rights
- secure
- not transferred to other countries without adequate protection

Do you know when you must share information about a child or young person, with or without their consent [pages 6-17, 6-18]?

And that individuals have access to information you hold about them?

Equal Opportunities

Does your recruitment of staff and promotion of activities consider and reflect diversity and equality of opportunity? Have you sought or provided training to ensure a good understanding of equal opportunities issues?

Have you thought about underrepresented groups in your youth work? What are you doing to ensure your work is inclusive? (Although not written for youth workers, you may find these “Inclusive Practice” guidelines are a helpful tool. Download at: <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/84031>).

Complaints, Grievances and Disciplinary Procedures

What procedures do you have in place to ensure a complaint or grievance is dealt with fairly, thoroughly and sensitively? Young people and workers should be aware of how and to whom they can complain, and the procedure should be clearly displayed. It is also good to encourage compliments as well as deal effectively with any complaints.

Are you aware of the steps that would be followed in cases of disciplinary action being required? Are your team? What safeguards are in place? What sort of appeals system is there?

Do you and your team follow current legislation regarding grievance procedures?

Legal Requirements and Moral Obligations

In an era where discrimination is as common a concern as ever, where identity theft and junk mail blight our communications, and where everybody has a strong sense of their rights (if not their responsibilities),

as well continual reminders of their litigious opportunities, it is important to have thought through your policies and practices.

However, the legal requirements are only half of the picture. We are morally obliged to fight against injustice, to show impartiality, confidentiality and transparency, to listen to criticism, and make right our mistakes. Jesus calls it 'loving your neighbour'. Such actions are mostly played out in the apparently trivial, mundane day-to-day work with young people and by paying attention to detail.

SOME EXAMPLES OF DIFFICULT SITUATIONS YOU MAY BE FACED WITH:

So... what are you going to do to keep young people and yourself safe?

- It's raining and a 12 year old in the youth group asks you for a lift home
- A young person is crying and turns to you for a hug and is slow to let go
- You're in the changing rooms at a swimming pool and one of the other leaders starts taking photos?
- A parent comes up to you demanding to know why a 23 year old would be 'Friends' with their daughter on Facebook and why you can't get friends your own age
- A friend wants to go for a quick drink with you to celebrate end of exams before you head on to the youth social that night – what do you order?
- A young person is trying to tell you something important but it's too noisy in the youth room to hear them properly.

Remember:

'The welfare of the child is paramount'.

Children Act 1989

Involving Young People

‘Youth work promotes young people’s participation in decisions about issues affecting them, from relationships with their families and friends to environmental pollution and world peace. Participation by young people means ensuring that they have a voice and the opportunity to have a positive impact on the ways decisions are made ... Through youth work, young people have opportunities to express themselves socially, artistically and politically in ways that can make a difference.’

Sapin (2009: 139)

A characteristic of healthy relationship is reciprocity, and a characteristic of good youth work is a commitment to empowering young people, and encouraging youth participation and a sense of ownership.

Whose Youth Work?

Never underestimate the power of the ego. It wants to be the centre of attention; all the time! Even when you commit yourself to a lifetime of serving other people there can be a crafty little part of you trying to nudge them out of the limelight. So we set off to do good deeds for others, but forget to include them in our calculations, and our work becomes more about **our** good ideas than what **they** might want, or more about our need to be needed than about others fulfilling their potential.

I know what you’re thinking – they won’t do it as well as you. Even letting them name their own youth group was a disaster. Well, that depends on how you define ‘doing things well’. Your ego would define it like this: ‘doing things so that I end up looking good’. But is that really the definition you want to use?

Have you talked with young people to discover their interests and goals, and what they feel is needed, in terms of youth work in their area?

What processes and methods are available to listen to local young people? How might different methods enable different groups and constituencies feed into the work?

How much have you involved young people in the planning and implementation of your project or activities? How could you involve them more?

Are you aware of how your beliefs, values, preferences and prejudices are influencing the planning and decision making process?

Which tasks can you identify which could be done by a young person, or where a young person could be involved in their delivery? How are you helping them to; identify, access or develop the resources, materials or skills required? What kind of feedback are you giving them on their input?

How are you supporting those young people who are involved with the implementation of the work?

Have you invited and listened to feedback from young people on the activities, programmes and/or sessions that they take part in? How often do you do this? Do you record the feedback? How have you responded to it?

Have you agreed with young people the criteria by which activities programmes and sessions should be monitored?

Have you taken of account of the appropriate expertise required for tasks given to young people?

What difference has young people's involvement made to the work you do with them?

Empowering Young People to Represent Themselves

Remember when you were a child reading those books, where the heroes were children of a similar age to you? Today it might be Harry Potter or Alex Rider. Maybe then it was the Famous Five, or Nancy Drew. And remember how annoying the adults were? They just would not listen to our heroes, or take them seriously. Didn't it make you want to shout with frustration? Well you best start believing in Teen Fiction stories - because you're in one! Only this time you're the adults. If you want to side with the heroes and make sure the Secret Seven save the day then you may want to give some thought to how teenagers can make themselves heard...

Do the young people feel that they have a voice within your organisation, church, and/or community?

How are you helping them to represent themselves and their peer group?

What are the issues they wish to communicate? What are their aims in representing these? Have you helped them to have a clear understanding of what they are hoping for in terms of outcomes?

'A good youth worker takes appropriate account of the skills, maturity and interests of young people in designing youth work activities, encourages and recognises imaginative ideas, and acknowledges the insights and input of young people.'

National Occupational Standards for Youth Work

Have you helped them identify key decision makers and influencers with whom they will need to engage?

How are you assisting them to collect valid information to support and present their views? How can you assist them in planning their presentation?

Have you encouraged them to consider the anticipated viewpoints of those they wish to communicate with?

Encouraging young people to represent themselves wherever possible. Are there contexts where they lack the skills or confidence to do so? Have you identified carefully, and agreed with them, the information you need to advocate on their behalf?

'Whose ideas have been dominant in the planning process? Yours or the young persons?'

Methodist Association of Youth Clubs

Do you plan to review the outcomes of presentations with the young people and agree consequent actions?

It is one of the mysteries of the Christian faith that God has chosen to involve human beings in His plans and his grand project of restoring the cosmos. 'Involvement' and 'empowerment' are buzz words of modern youth work practice, but they are very old ideas, and it has always been our responsibility to extend to others the kindness we have received from God.

Giving young people responsibilities for others: Young Leaders

Many churches encourage young people under 18 to become Young/Junior Leaders with children younger than themselves, to develop their own leadership skills and to give them an opportunity to contribute to the work of the church. This can be very valuable both for the Young Leader and for younger children, but there are some pitfalls to watch for. The Young Leader is changing role from being a youth group member to being seen by the members as a trusted older person. Whilst he or she should always be working in the company of at least two youth or children's workers, and always carefully supervised, nevertheless the children/young people will view him or her as being in a position of trust and as a role model.

The transition from peer to leader can be difficult and the young person will need help with setting appropriate boundaries, both in doing activities and how he or she relates to the young people outside the church setting. The following guidelines may help:

- Ensure that the age gap between the young leader and the group is at least 3 years
- Give the young leader training in what the role requires, before he or she takes it on – including setting appropriate boundaries. Include some examples of difficult situations they might face.
- Ensure the young leader is supervised and supported at all times.

Working with Groups

'A group is two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person'

M E Shaw, Group Dynamics (1976)

A great deal of a youth worker's time is spent working with young people in groups of various sizes. It is something we take for granted as part of the work, but what are the particular challenges of work with 'two or more persons'? What skills are required to meet those challenges? How are we developing those skills? And how can we ensure that the multiple influences within a group, including our own, tend towards the positive?

Group Dynamics

There are two secrets to making home-made bread. One is to pay careful attention to the individual ingredients – randomly substituting 'flowers' for 'flour' will not taste as similar as it sounds. The second is to pay careful attention to how they mix. Mix them thoroughly, work them in together, of course, but think about what comes into contact with what. Get the yeast wet too soon and a misshapen loaf awaits...

The secret to seeing young people develop is to hold their individuality in high regard, but to think just as carefully about how the individuals are altered by the group, and how they shape it. No two recipes for success are the same, so you're going to have to use your loaf...

How has the group formed? Are there clear groups within it? Do gender, ethnicity, age, where young people live or the different schools they attend produce significant sub-groups? How can you encourage young people to interact across potential divisions? Which activities promote new associations? How can you cater for the needs of smaller groups within the group?

How big a group is 'too' big? Have you thought about the number of adults involved? Have you thought about the possible benefits, in addition to safeguarding concerns, of a high ratio of trustworthy adults to young people?

How can you ensure young people experience activities involving different scales and sizes of groups? If yours is a small group where can you helpfully connect with others or with a larger gathering? And how can you help individuals think about what they can gain from, and bring to, different sorts of groups?

How can you encourage cohesion within the group? These are some factors to consider:

- Stability - cohesion develops the longer a group is together with the same members
- Similarity- cohesion develops when the more similar the group members are in terms of age, sex, skills and attitudes
- Size - cohesion develops more quickly in small groups
- Satisfaction- cohesion is associated with the extent to which team members are pleased with each others performance, behaviour and conformity to the norms of the group
- Shared purpose – cohesion grows as the group collaborates on tasks and shares experiences outside their normal range of activity.

- Structured patterns of communication – cohesion is increased where there is a clear understanding of the groups agreed rules, and regular structured opportunity to hear news, raise questions and give and receive feedback and praise.

How can you address the tension between growing cohesion and exclusivity? How do you best encourage the group to include those who are new or on the fringes, and to have an outward perspective?

Models, Types and Styles

'Different Strokes for Different Folks'. 'Horses for Courses'. 'Square Pegs and Round Holes'. There is no shortage of clichés to describe the fact that any work which involves more than one person requires differentiation, i.e. the ability to recognise that a particular context or specific individuals, require particular approaches or specific material.

A lot of thinking has gone into the types of personality, behaviours you might encounter or facilitation skills you might employ in any given group. There are patterns and themes and a range of metaphors to describe them.

Models of Leading Group Activities

What exactly is your role within a particular group? What is it perceived to be by the young people? By parents? By your colleagues? By those to whom you are accountable?

Do you have an agreed job description? Do any volunteers and helpers have job descriptions? Does everyone have a clear understanding of the responsibilities and limitations of their role and those of others in the group?

Have you introduced new leaders to the young people? Have you introduced new young people to leaders, individuals, or the group as a whole? What are appropriate ways to do that?

Is there one person with clear overall responsibility? Should there be?

What kind of leadership are you aspiring to? What will be most effective in your context?

- General/Director/Head Teacher – A leader who sets strategic goals, but is deliberately seen as not easily accessible. Stands apart from the group, but has high visibility on formal occasions. Ranging from Dumbledore to Napoleon.
- Guru – A leader to whom people go for advice, whose expertise is trusted and often invited, but who does not get involved with the groups activities and maintains a low profile unless consulted. Ranging from Julian of Norwich to the Buddha.
- King John – A leader given authority without due consideration. One with their own agenda which may or may not include the well-being of the group. A leader who has welcomed power but not responsibility.

- Skipper – A leader who is always with the group, and has authority (probably within a larger structure), but leads from the front and by example, and can be seen to do the things they demand of others. With a tendency to be strong willed, for better or worse. Ranging from John Terry to Jack Bauer.
- Sergeant-Major – Does a lot of shouting. Often has a whistle. Gives instructions clearly, doesn't suffer fools gladly. Capable of generating fierce loyalty and intense dislike, depending on the degree of kindness and integrity seen under the surface. Ranging from Gordon Ramsay to the Dance Teacher in the 'Kids from Fame' who said 'Fame costs –and right here is where you start paying. In sweat.'
- Shop Steward – One of the group, often nominated by the group, but trusted by leadership and membership alike. An advocate. Capable of making things run very smoothly or very badly. And often the subject of rivalry. Ranging from Banquo to Maid Marion.
- Committee – A group of people, ideally with a mixture of skills and personality types, and representative of the group itself, perhaps including elected members, that take democratic responsibility for strategic and practical decision-making. Its Chair may or may not have the power to make executive decisions. Ranging from University Christian Unions to the Cabinet.
- Facilitator – A good listener whose priority is to ensure every voice is heard. Not keen to impose a direction but wanting to help those initiatives and opinions that emerge within the group to take constructive shape. Can be perceived as passive, but in the best cases is quick to recognise potential and offer support. Ranging from - well it's hard to think of a famous facilitator, which is sort of the point!
- Messiah – Unless they actually are the Messiah, a very dangerous type of leader. Strong desire to be and do everything, without any real sense of their own limitations, the potential of others, the need for support or accountability, or the usual outcomes for messiah figures. Veneration. Incarceration. Medication. Execution. None of them good. Unless you actually are the Messiah...
- Christ-like Leader – Well – what is one of these like? Worth considering at length...

Learning Styles and Personality Types

Have you taken into account the different learning styles and personalities in the group? Do the activities include 'auditory' learners? 'Visual' thinkers? Those who learn best by interacting, through their bodies or by practical exercises?

Are you differentiating appropriately according to age and ability? What about reading? Sight? Hearing? What about those in the group with disabilities or learning difficulties?

How do you ensure that everyone is included, feels included and is able to contribute?

How are you catering for, and challenging, the introverts? The extroverts? Those who are desperate for physical activity, and those who loathe it?

Do you have access to training or resources to broaden your awareness of these issues and different approaches?

How are you monitoring these factors?

Is your leadership subject to observation and evaluation?

Conflict

Peace is not the absence of conflict. If you think it is you are likely to ignore problems, wishing they weren't there, hoping they'll go away, while all the time they're just getting worse. Or you'll try and isolate the source of the trouble and get rid of it. Which, in the case of groups of people, usually involves demonising someone and allowing them to become a scapegoat, or shutting your doors to the very people you exist to help.

Be brave enough to examine how you deal with the difficult people, look at conflict situations openly and think about what they reveal as well as how they might be resolved. Stability is not the absence of imbalance – that's inertia. It is the ability to contain imbalance without falling. And it is only learned by trial and error.

Working with Behavioural Difficulties

Do you have experience of working with young people who have behavioural difficulties? Does anyone in your group? Do you have access to anyone who can offer advice?

In situations where difficulties of this kind arise, are you aware of the background to them? Do you have contact with others involved in the care of the young person? Can they help you understand the behaviour, its possible causes or patterns, and can you identify, with them and with the young person, suitable course of action that can help avoid distress for them, their peers, their family and their community?

Do you have a clear and agreed set of rules for your project or activity? Are parents/guardians aware of them? Are the young people?

Is everyone aware of a clear set of procedures and consequences if these rules are broken?

Do you have a system for regulating membership? Controlling entry? Do you have registers which record who enters and leaves the premises and when they do so?

Are you aware of any particular threats to the safety of your young people locally? Are they? How do you keep informed?

Are you in contact with the Local Police? Do you know whom to contact in an emergency?

Have you thought about seeking professional help and expertise? Be aware of your own limitations. Is it appropriate to get advice or input from other local service providers and specialists? Have you discussed this with those you report to?

Conflict Resolution

Conflict Styles: In the 1970s Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann(1974) identified five main 'conflict mode' styles which might help you identify which style you or others tend towards when conflict arises.

- **COMPETITIVE:** People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand, and know what they want. They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. This style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be made fast; when the decision is unpopular; or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly. However, it can leave people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful especially when used in less urgent situations.
- **COLLABORATIVE:** People tending towards a collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved. These people can be highly assertive but unlike the competitor, they cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important. This style is useful in bringing together a variety of viewpoints to get the best solution; when there have been previous conflicts in the group; or when the situation is too important or too complex for a simple compromise.
- **COMPROMISING:** People who prefer a compromising style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone. Everyone is expected to give up something, and the compromiser also expects to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming.
- **ACCOMMODATING:** This style indicates a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs. The accommodator often knows when to give in to others, but can be persuaded to surrender a position even when it is not warranted. This person is not assertive but is highly cooperative. Accommodation is appropriate when the issues matter more to the other party, when peace is more valuable than winning, or if you feel there are other conflicts ahead where any equity gained will be valuable.
- **AVOIDING:** People tending towards this style seek to evade the conflict entirely. This style is typified by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions, and not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. It can be appropriate when victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial, or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem. It can however lead to simple procrastination and greater problems by consequence.

Some good questions to ask when dealing with conflicts that arise include:

- Are you aware of the overriding conflict style you or your team tend to employ?
- Are you placing good relationships as the first priority? Should you be? Are you responding calmly and seeking to build mutual respect?
- Are you keeping people and problems separate? Are you able to resist the temptation to dismiss the other person as 'just being difficult'?
- Are you paying attention to the interests that are being presented?
- Are you listening or waiting for an opportunity to defend yourself?
- Are you using active listening skills – restating, paraphrasing, summarizing - to ensure you hear and understand one another's positions and perceptions?

- Have you gathered information, sought out facts, and agreed and established the objective, observable elements that will have an impact on the decision?
- Are you using 'I' statements and avoiding as far as possible the language of right and wrong?
- Have you reached an agreement as to what the problem is before seeking a solution?
- Are you exploring options together? Are you open to the idea that a third position may exist, and that you can get to this idea through dialogue?

'There go my people. I must follow them, for I am their leader.'

Mahatma Gandhi

Camps and Residentials

'We asked 100 young people to name the most significant experiences in their spiritual journey. You said 'Going on Camp'. Our survey said? 'PING!' That was the top answer.'

Family Fortunes Youth Work Edition (Hypothetical)

An inordinate amount of people name camps, residentials, weekends away and short-term mission opportunities as amongst the most significant experiences of their lives. There are correspondingly an inordinate amount of opportunities available for young people to participate in trips of this kind. Running such an expedition, however, is an exercise in planning and logistics that would comfortably match a medium size military campaign! And no-one in their right mind sets off to war without 'first sitting down and considering whether they are strong enough'...

Before you run a residential of your own – have you considered the possibility of taking your group on an existing camp? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being part of a larger group or organisation? And what possibilities and problems might be presented by running something in conjunction with other local groups?

Do your young people want to go away?

Is there sufficient interest from the young people? What are the limitations of budget and time that will influence their decisions? How might you generate enthusiasm and overcome these obstacles? How should you publicise your event?

Where will you go? How far is it? How will you get there? Have you visited the site before making any decisions?

Some sites and centres book up over a year in advance. When do you plan on going? And have you looked into availability with sufficient notice?

Do you have to pay a deposit? How far in advance? What is the deadline for cancellation?

How long will you go for? The 24-hour, full on nature of residentials makes them exhausting. What is a realistic expectation, in terms of the length of your stay, to place on your young people, or your volunteers, and yourself?

What time of the year is it? How is it affected by the Academic year? Do all your local school holidays coincide?

What is your budget? How will you cost the event? What is an appropriate booking fee? Who will that be paid to and by when? Can everyone in your group afford it?

What sort of a team will you need? Is it self-catering? Who will cater? Do they have the necessary certificates in Food Hygiene qualifications (1990 Food Act)? How will you recruit volunteers?

What is the purpose of the camp? And who are the people coming on it? What do they think they have signed up for? How well does the programme reflect these considerations?

Having thought about these preliminary questions – if you still want to do the trip, then refer to A Safe Church, pages 4-19 to 4-22 to work out how you need to proceed. This will include:

Have you informed your PCC and have they given permission?

What kind of information and training will you provide for volunteers and leaders?

How far in advance of the residential will you need to plan your programme in order to allow time for information to be disseminated and digested and suitable training dates booked?

What kind of information do you need to make available to young people and their parents/guardians?

Are they clear about times for leaving and returning?

Do you have all the necessary health, diet and consent forms, including emergency contact numbers? Have you brought a copy with you and left one with a responsible person 'off-site' who is contactable?

Have you thought about the additional implications for safety, cost and personnel in using minibuses and coaches? If you or members of your team are driving a minibus do they have a 'Small Bus Permit' [see pages 4-25 to 4-27]?

Are you adequately insured? Have you checked what the extent of insurance cover is for the residential, its activities and any travel involved?

What is the role of ritual in a successful residential or camp (ritual in this case means the planned routine of community gathering and prayer at certain points in the day)?

And after the trip:

How will you evaluate your residential and build on its successes? Many camps derive great benefit from seeing the same young people attend consistently over several years – how can you ensure continuity and development over a sustained period?

'Memories are the milestones by which we mark our journey with God.'

Doug Fields and Duffy Robbins (1996)

Given the often-reported significance of young people's experiences of residentials, what sort of follow-up are you envisaging? Will there be regular chance to meet up afterwards?

Will there be opportunities to reflect on what happened, and to share stories?

Are you planning a 'Reunion' during the year? How much of this information will be available during the residential and for young people to take home with them?

How will you thank everyone that was involved?

Working with a Team

'Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.'

Henry Ford

Good youth work is by definition a collaborative process. Despite the fact that many youth workers experience feelings of isolation, despite the fact that some of the pioneering personalities that are drawn to youth work find their gifts and tendencies at odds with the dynamics of a healthy team - the ability to gather, direct and develop a team, and the ability to contribute to one, are key to being a positive long-term influence in the lives of young people.

Signature Strengths

A great deal of thinking and research in the past decade has led to the astonishing conclusion that people function best when they are happiest, and that teams function best when their members are happiest. It sounds like the most ridiculous statement of the obvious and yet - when did you last assess how happy the different parts of your work with young people make you?

Which elements of the work are you happiest doing? Which are the sources of greatest unhappiness or frustration?

What is the ratio of one to the other? Do you spend more time on the things that make you happy or unhappy?

How aware are you of the strengths and virtues you naturally have – what positive psychologists call your 'signature strengths'?

How could you move towards spending more time exercising these in your work?

Which are your areas of weakness? How could these aspects be taken on by others for whom they are signature strengths? Or do you need training to build up your own strengths?

How happy are the members of your team? Have you asked them? Do you have regular opportunity to ask them? What is it in what they are doing or being asked to do that is making them most or least happy?

Are there elements of your youth work that you have assumed are necessary, which nobody in your team considers a signature strength?

How might you go about recruiting new team members for that area?

In the absence of new team members, does that area need to be re-examined? Is it being treated with the right priority? What would happen if it wasn't there?

Given that teams that are unhappy do not function well or for long, how do you hold the need for happiness with the Christian ethos of selflessness and service? Is there a tension?

Tools for Understanding Differences of Temperament and Working Styles

Have you spent time as a team thinking about the personality types and working styles present in and absent from the group?

There are a number of resources readily available such as the Belbin and Myers Briggs Personality 'tests' as well as Martin Seligman's Signature Strengths audits which can inform and stimulate this discussion.

If you have used tools of this kind – have you just used one? How have you gone about ensuring that the categories provided don't become a way of pigeon-holing or judging individuals in your team, or a form of excuse, limiting your development?

Any insights gained from exercises of this type may have a limited shelf life, shifting over time, and with changes in the make-up of a group. How often do you take time to reconsider questions like this as a team?

How often do you spend time together as a team that is not focussed on 'business'?

Where, in your termly or annual cycles and timetables, do retreat, work consultancy, or spiritual direction fit?

Recruitment and Employment

It is a vexed question in the world of vocation; how do we draw the line between personality profiling and a divine summons? We are from a faith tradition whose founders were not chosen on the strength of their CVs, but we have to work out how to put the right safeguards in place so that we don't end up with the wrong person, in the wrong job. And we have to comply with legal requirements for recruitment.

Our beliefs are rooted in the advent of a messiah, a special one, but what are the dangers of looking for a new member of staff who will solve all our problems, and what happens if we ignore professionalism in favour of waiting for the 'right' person to come and knock on our door? There must be some guidelines to help us steer a course between pretending we're just another business, and being all spiritually minded but no earthly use...

What is it you are looking for from a new member of staff, paid or volunteer?

Whether paid or not:

How and where will you advertise for new recruits?

Have you drawn up a Job Description and do you have a Person Specification?

What references will you take up?

Have you arranged for an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure to be obtained?

See A Safe Church section 5, especially pages 5-3 to 5-6, which is based on Church of England Safer Recruitment procedures, available on the Church of England website.

If they are to be a salaried member of staff, are you aware of your responsibilities as an employer? (See Section H in Part 3 of the Diocesan handbook and Resources Guide - http://www.southwark.anglican.org/downloads/resources/H&RG_pt3.pdf)

What are the arrangements with regard to:

- probationary periods
- contracts
- payroll
- annual leave
- sickness
- maternity and paternity leave
- pensions
- line management
- performance review
- disciplinary procedures
- appeals
- equal opportunities
- trade unions
- professional development
- notice periods
- redundancy

Roles and Responsibilities

The thing that makes life difficult for a lot of managers is people not doing their jobs. The thing that makes life difficult for a lot of staff is not knowing what their job is!

The problem for those who organise teams is getting enough of the right kind of people to volunteer. The fear for most potential volunteers is that they might be doing a deal with Darth Vader – not so much a fixed term contract as a long-term obligation. Somewhere along the line we have to develop ways of assigning tasks, monitoring progress, providing feedback, and adapting to change that help people with something to contribute to make a telling contribution, and help people we rely upon feel less put upon. And it starts with examining how we communicate...

Are you clear about the roles and responsibilities of each member of your team? Are they? How can you check?

Have you provided team members with a breakdown of their specific role and what is expected of them? Are these expectations agreed? What review structure is in place? Who do they report to? Or complain to? Do they know?

Have you provided training?

Do your team feel their roles reflect their skills? Are you providing them opportunities to develop?

Are you providing supervision?

Who has overall responsibility for individual activities?

Who has overall responsibility for the whole project? Does everybody know? Do they know?

Volunteers

How long have people signed up for? Is there an agreed date to review any commitment?

Do you have a volunteer agreement? How does not having one leave the volunteer and the organisation vulnerable? How often are any agreements reviewed?

Do any responsibilities reflect people's skills? Do they give the opportunity to develop?

Are you/they aware of all the relevant policies of the organisation?

Have you/they received suitable training?

Has your/their role been clarified to the young people?

Do you have regular opportunities to meet before and after activities to plan or evaluate them?

Do you/they receive feedback or supervision on your role and contribution? How regularly?

Do they incur any expenses? Are they able to claim them back?

Do they desperately want to stop being a volunteer? Have they told anybody?

Communication

This is another area where you will need to refer to the relevant sections of "A Safe Church"

What are the most effective ways to communicate with your team? Do you meet regularly? Does everyone have relevant contact information?

How do you coordinate diaries, appointments and timetables? How do you keep one another informed of changes?

Have you thought about what sort of communication can appropriately happen by email? By text? In person? By letter?

Is there information that needs to be readily accessible to all the team? Where is this located?

Do you have policies that include these aspects? For example, is it acceptable for a member of staff to call in sick by sending a text? Do you have an agreed protocol?

How do you communicate with young people? Do you have agreed policies that cover personal email, social networking sites, internet and telephone use during work hours, texting and messaging?

Have you thought about Child Protection and Data Protection issues arising from use of text messaging, email, instant messaging and social networking sites [4-33]?

Do you have a website? How up to date is it? Do you include contact information or photos of members of your team – if so, do you have their permission to do so [page 4-33]?

How do you inform young people or their parents/guardians of unscheduled changes to programmes and events? Is leaving a note on a locked door sufficient, for example?

'If you want to travel fast, travel alone. If you want to travel far, travel together.'

N'gambai African Proverb

Working in a Community

‘Community cannot for long feed on itself; it can only flourish with the coming of others from beyond - their unknown and undiscovered brethren.’

Howard Thurman

Just as to think of youth work as a solo activity is to fail to understand youth work, so to work without any clear sense of being part of a community, itself part of a larger community, is to fail to grasp the nature of our calling, of our humanity and of the gospel.

Understanding the communities of which you are a part

Imagine trying to solve a Rubik’s Cube one face at a time. Or worse, imagine 6 people trying to solve a Rubik’s Cube – each with responsibility for just one face and no interest in, or access to, the others. It would be hard. And yet this is the error to which we are prone in youth work – each of us eagerly beavering away at the part of the puzzle assigned to us – this group of teens, that parish, this aspect of life. ‘I am a church youth worker – I don’t concern myself with secular youth provision’. ‘I work in school – I don’t deal with young people in a church context’. ‘I only do the blue squares. I only work with the green’.

Fail to understand the communities you are working in, or the varied communities your young people are part of, and you will have to fight very hard to keep all your pieces in place – and still never reach the desired solution. Or you will have to watch in passive frustration, as your good work is undone by invisible hands. The alternative is more complicated. But it’s the only way that can work...

THE CHURCH

What are the characteristics of the community the youth group is part of? If your youth group is part of a church – what are its demographics? How is it made up? What are its aims and aspirations?

Where does your group fit within that? In what ways does it feel excluded from that community or strongly connected to it? And vice versa?

If you run a Sunday Morning group - what does the rest of the church know about its leaders, its members, its activities? Is the group always separate? For the whole service? Do the congregation see and hear the leaders, or young people, contributing to the wider church community? How regularly?

Do the leaders feel the support and gratitude of the congregation? Have you asked them?

How are members of the church able to interact with, or get to know, the group as a whole or individuals within it?

Where are the points of common interest or shared experience? What are the occasions that might see members of your group coming together, integrating within the whole church and sharing its contribution to it?

Do you, for example, eat together? Is the Eucharist, a Harvest Supper, or a weekend away a good occasion to cross boundaries of age or tribe? Do young people participate fully in your worship, and take on other responsibilities if they wish? How strategically do you approach such events in your calendar?

THE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

What do you know about the area your group is in? What are the characteristics of that community? What are its demographics? What are its perceived needs?

What are people afraid of?

Where do the smaller communities that make up the whole overlap? Where are they discrete? What common ground is there? Which are no-go areas?

Which aspects of the community are thriving? Which are struggling? How are you part of that?

How are the various micro-communities represented in your group? What are the implications of this?

How well known is your group locally? Where is it known about? Where is it not? Is that deliberate? How can you change it? Do you want to?

What sort of reputation does your group have amongst local young people? Local parents? The Police? Local traders? Local schools? Do you know? How might you find out?

What kind of reputation do you want it to have?

What are the key decision-making bodies in your area? Which are the significant forums and networks? Are you involved? Are you informed? Are you represented? Are your young people? Should they be?

Understanding the communities of which Young People are a part

Which communities do local young people identify themselves as part of? What about the young people in your group? Are there obvious groups within your project that might feel strongly bonded by geography, school, cultural background, language, sports affiliations, fashion or musical tastes?

How might these be influencing the attendance, accessibility, behaviour, safety and diversity of your group?

What are the benefits and costs of these attachments? To the individuals? To the wider group? To the community at large? What are the threats to these groups, and what threats might they pose? What do the young people perceive these threats to be?

How are you helping the young people to explore and better understand their own need to belong, and the constructive and destructive ways that can be worked out?

How are you helping them to think about groups they are not part of? How are you helping to deconstruct prejudice and challenge their presuppositions?

How are you enabling young people to contribute to their communities in ways that raise their self-esteem and sense of responsibility? And how are you encouraging them to reach out beyond their own communities?

Christian Community and the marginalised

It is the nature of a community to exclude. It gathers itself around something – a place, a belief, an average income - and automatically there are those who are closer to the centre and those who are on the fringes. But the thing that defines the heart of our community is how it works to engage with those further out. And the acid test of our character lies in how we react when someone exposes our shortcomings in that regard. If we ever let them.

Of course, if that is true of any community, it is most true of the one that exists for the benefit of its non-members. A Christian community has a particular responsibility to continually search its heart, and address the people and the issues at its core, on its doorstep, and on the other side of the world. This should apply to every Christian community regardless of its size...

The margins of community

Which groups within your community, and which individuals within your group, are, or perceive themselves to be, marginalised or 'on the fringes'? What is your responsibility towards them?

What is the difference between marginalisation and choosing not to be involved? How do you offer hospitality without being invasive or patronising?

Do you seek training and input from those with relevant experience on issues that can result in young people being marginalised; disability, mental health problems, minority ethnic concerns? How does that input shape your planning and provision?

Christian Community

What are the distinctives of Christian Community?

What are they understood to be by your young people? And what models are they able to see in practice?

What opportunities do they have to hear adults discussing their struggle to live out a Christ-like life, to ask questions and reflect on what they hear?

How are young people that profess a Christian faith in your community being challenged to embody the values of the New Testament? Are they simply told how they 'should' behave?

What are some of the ways you might help them to actually consider 'what Jesus would do' as they make choices about relationship and behaviour?

Are they developing a growing awareness of their place in the vast story of God's redemption of the entire cosmos?

Is their practice as a group part of a conscious and deliberate engagement with this process of transformation? Do they think it is?

Are they learning how to pray?

The Interaction of Local and Global Communities

Are your young people being challenged to consider global issues, including environmental concerns, trade justice and the global consequences of their own choices?

How informed are those choices? Are you helping them to evaluate the issues and possible courses of action for themselves?

Do they have a growing sense of the connection between local and global communities? How is this being stimulated?

What opportunities are there for young people in your community to get involved in activities that promote justice, sustainable development and environmental health?

Have you conducted an audit of your own practices as a group with regard to these issues? How green is your youth group, for example?

Have you considered the short-term mission opportunities that might be available to your young people?

Where would you go for advice?

'You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before others in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.'

Jesus (Matthew 5: 13-16)

Working within Church Structures

'What is your job exactly?'

Patricia (15)

Working in the context of a church presents particular challenges and opportunities. It can offer tremendous license to interact as a recognised professional with local schools, local authorities, health professionals and the police. It can have exactly opposite effect. Much depends on how professionally youth workers view and conduct themselves, and the way in which the Diocese, their PCC and their Incumbent recognise their role and include them, and their role, or otherwise in the work of the church as a whole.

The Character of a Church

Every church has a different understanding of its mission. Why it exists, what it is seeking to do, and how its tasks should be shared between lay and ordained members. Which is very helpful for you in defining the parameters of your role. If you know what that understanding is...

Equally, each church approaches the patterns and rhythms of the wider church differently; how it uses liturgy, where it connects with the fixed points of the church year – which will also shape how you work out your work with the young people in that parish. So you could do with having a handle on that too.

But, for all it is imperative to keep in mind the distinctives of the church you work in, it is just as important to think carefully about the diversity of belief within and around it, and how you participate in its interaction with those who define mission differently.

Clergy and Laity

How do you view your role, and what do you understand your responsibilities to be, with regard to the Clergy in your church? How do they perceive your role? Have you discussed it with them?

Are you part of the staff or ministry team? Do you attend staff meetings? PCC? Should you?

Do you have a reporting structure to feed back to your colleagues, your line-manager, the PCC?

What is your understanding of the structures of the church? Do you understand the role of the Vicar? Curate? Lay Assistants? Lay Readers? Pastoral Auxiliaries? Church Wardens? Parish Safeguarding Officers? Do you know who they are? Do they know who you are? Where does your role fit in or their role fit in with you?

Mission Statement

What is your church's Mission Statement? How does your youth work fit into that?

What is the mission statement for your work with young people? Or the mission statement of your group? Do you have one? What would be changed by having one? Or the process of agreeing one?

Church Calendar

How do the feasts, fasts and festivals of the Church year feature in your planning? Do they? Should they?

What possibilities do they offer for connecting with the rest of the church, with other local churches, and with the Church globally? How might the rhythms they offer provide a healthy counterpoint to some of our current cultural tendencies?

Liturgy and Lectionary

Does your church follow the lectionary? Does it follow a teaching plan? How do any sessions you run with young people, that involve studying the Bible, connect with what is being taught or discussed elsewhere in the church? Do they connect? Should they?

What is your understanding of liturgy and specifically of your church's approach to it?

Where does liturgy feature in your work with young people? How are you able to help them understand and interact with the liturgical content of services at your church?

How are you helping young people get a sense of their place in the church historical and universal? What helps them to connect with other Christians, locally and globally, and those that have gone before them?

And how aware are they of other aspects of the church whose practices differ from theirs?

Respecting Theological Diversity

How are you promoting a respect for, and understanding of, different theological perspectives amongst your young people?

What kinds of church backgrounds are represented in your group? Are there people with significantly different experiences or views? How are they and the rest of the group able to reflect and draw on those differences to deepen their faith?

What special challenges do Church-based youth workers face with regard to young people of other faiths and of no faith? Have you discussed these with your church, and those you are accountable to? How will you provide a tolerant, respectful and hospitable environment for all young people, and what approaches you will adopt with regard to other faiths?

Professional and confessional approaches

The fact of being a Church youth worker means that by definition you have a confessional approach to youth work, but there may be contexts you are required to work in ways which do not welcome this approach.

As part of your role, you may be required to be present in church for Sunday worship – some will view you therefore as a regular member of the congregation, but you will always carry your position of trust with young people and their parents. How does that affect how you act, and what you do?

How do you understand the distinctions, overlap, and potential clashes between your role as a professional responsible for minors, and your role as a youth worker with a particular faith base, ethos and mission statement?

Have you discussed these issues with your team and your church? Who would you look to for advice on questions like these?

Are there aspects of your work where a confessional approach is inappropriate?

Are parents, young people and partners in the community clear about your beliefs, your ethos and how they inform your working practices? Should they be?

‘Youth work in general remains suspicious of confessional approaches that create little space for a critical relationship between the young person, their religion and society... [It is an approach that] can be viewed as indoctrination, manipulation of funding or worse.’

M G Khan, Muslim Youth Work Foundation

Working within School Structures

“You can’t work with young people for very long without recognising that school is second only to family in its life-shaping influence on young people. For any church giving priority to work with teenagers, school therefore has to become an important part of their involvement.”

Andy Hickford, *Essential Youth* (1998)

Young people spend about 35 hours each week in school and it isn’t surprising that youth workers are often keen to engage with young people during that significant portion of time. Working with schools can be a great opportunity. It can enable you to enhance the day-to-day experience of those who attend, work in and visit the school. It can help you to get to know some of the struggles, triumphs and issues faced by your local community beyond those individuals and families who attend your church. It is an opportunity to serve, to bless and to build caring relationships with new people.

There is no obligation for a school to welcome the presence or activity of youth workers within its bounds, and yet a great many schools are staffed by people who would love to be able to “do more” than they have the time and energy to offer and good youth work can complement the work of teachers. The key is in understanding the roles and responsibilities of schools, and in particular, humbly seeking to add something to what the school can offer those in its care.

Relating to schools

Schools take very seriously their responsibility to protect their pupils. Establishing relationships of trust is crucial. This may take time, especially if the school or link-teacher has had a negative experience of faith-based workers in the past. Respect school structures (e.g. by parking in the right place on school grounds, following procedures for “signing in” as a visitor, complying with the dress code) and enquire about what the school needs. Patiently demonstrate that you are seeking to serve and encourage, not manufacture a position to pursue a personal agenda.

What kind of work?

Consider what kind of involvement you might be able to offer to the school. Could you contribute to the formal curriculum, take assemblies or lessons? Would you be more suited to the informal side of school life, such as lunchtime clubs and extra-curricular activities?

What sort of impact are you hoping to have? Assemblies will allow you to engage with large numbers of people, but provide little opportunity for relationship building. Could you have a deeper impact through group work, for example in a club?

Assemblies

Do the school have a theme for the week/term they are following? How can you contribute to that?

Does the school have guidelines for assembly content? There could be quite different expectations

depending on the mix of ethnicities/cultures among the pupils, dependent on things like if it is a church school, the values of the Head Teacher, and so on.

What is your time frame for the assembly? Can you shorten your planned content if the assembly starts late or if there are a lot of school notices? The school has a timetable to follow, so it is very important that you don't overrun.

Have you practised your presentation skills? Are you clear in your own mind about what you intend to say and what the key points are? Can you present your material without having to refer to your notes too often? Are you speaking at the right volume? What is your body language saying?

What is your message? The Luton Churches Education Trust (www.lcet.org) makes these points:

“It's often hard for schools to find the appropriate material to meet some of the requirements for 'daily acts of worship'. The breadth of faiths and backgrounds among students means that it's important any input acknowledges this as well as engaging students interests.

We believe it's possible to do something of real value even in the short time an assembly provides. A good assembly should creatively engage students with moral and spiritual ideas and give opportunity for personal reflection.

Our assemblies often contain humour, interaction, personal reflection and strong connections with the culture and experience of young people.”

Lessons

There may be opportunities open to you to be involved in RE lessons, from being interviewed by a class about what you believe and 'why' through to delivering a whole series of lessons on Christianity or ethics.

However, could you offer support to other areas of the school curriculum? How about Citizenship? Sex and Relationships? or accredited programmes like ASDAN? Could your skills in business or knowledge of local history be of any use?

As with assemblies, it is crucial to plan your timings, deliver your material in an engaging way, remember that there are a range of different learning styles and follow any guidelines given by the school.

Curriculum

Are there aspects of the school curriculum beyond lessons which you could engage with? Some schools find it extremely difficult to identify work experience placements for their pupils. Could your church offer a placement to one or two young people? Could you motivate members of the congregation to facilitate placements in their places of work?

Are there opportunities for offering one-to-one academic support for pupils with special educational needs or where English is a second language?

Do any of the schools near you run a mentoring programme where pupils are matched with professionals working a field they are interested in (e.g. Career Academies)? Are they running a Youth Enterprise Scheme?

Counselling/Pastoral Care

It is sometimes difficult for teachers to offer pastoral care to pupils due to a number of factors: the demands of a busy timetable, the lack of anonymity making pupils uncomfortable to talk to them, the dual roles they play of supporter and disciplinarian.

Could this be an area where the church could offer support to the pupils and staff, e.g. through mentoring, a listening service, formal counselling?

If so, how will you establish the boundaries of confidentiality between pupils, parents and school staff?

Extra-Curricular Activities

Could you support one of the school clubs or teams? If you like sport, could you get involved in helping with the football, hockey or athletics coaching? Is there an art club or a choir? Could you help with costumes, sets, props or lighting for the school play?

Perhaps the school has a Christian Union which would welcome visiting speakers/facilitators?

Could you offer to provide detached youth work in the playground during break times, building relationships with the pupils, chatting to young people who are isolated and lonely?

Extended Schools

Some schools offer 'extended' services and activities outside the school day to help meet the needs of their pupils, families and communities. These services and activities have included "wrap around care" – breakfast and after school clubs, adult education and community access to school facilities. Schools are expected to consult with the community to identify local needs as they develop their 'extended' services.

Could you support wrap around care or adult education? Could you be involved in a community consultation?

Pupil Referral Units

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are a type of school for young people who cannot attend 'normal' school. This may be because of medical problems, a temporary lack of a place in a school, exclusion from school, pregnancy/teenage parenthood or behavioural problems.

Is there a PRU in your area? What support could you offer to the young people who attend and staff who work there?

Supporting the staff or the school as a whole

Are there ways that you could bless the staff? Could you offer practical assistance (e.g. photocopying) or pastoral support? Perhaps it might be appropriate to hold an event to encourage and thank the staff, such as providing a meal for them on a staff training day?

Does the school have a need for governors, PTA members, fund raisers, etc.? Is there a group that prays for the school on a regular basis that you could join? If not, could you gather one?

Working with Other Agencies

“It takes a whole village to raise a child.”

African Proverb

We can sometimes get very isolated and insular in our approach to work with young people. Sometimes this is because of narrow mindedness, sometimes out of an appropriate concern that young people get the kind of ‘Christian’ help that is considered best for them, and sometimes we think we have all the skills and answers needed!

We are too often ignorant of what other services are available to the young people we work with, and too regularly there is no relationship between youth workers and the people who might already be working to provide for the same constituency, albeit in different ways. This can lead us to struggle in areas of work where another could more easily and effectively deliver support. This can lead to services being duplicated and young people not getting the best possible provision.

It may be a complicated task to identifying who is doing what in your area and make contact with those people, but it is worth the investment of time to build up a “directory” of services and providers. Working together in partnership with others is a key responsibility and role of the modern youth worker.

Pastoral care

Social workers and Family Support workers are often looking for positive activities that young people they work with can engage in, as well as positive role models and pastoral or mentoring support. Does your youth work have the capacity to engage and support young people from outside the church? How could you make this known to relevant practitioners?

If it would be difficult for a young person who does not know any of the existing members to join the group, is this something you could address?

Seeking professional input

Although youth workers are able to discuss pastoral concerns and a range of other issues with young people, there are some circumstances in which they must ‘signpost’. Some difficulties or questions need the involvement of specialists. For instance, mental health issues or trauma may need to be referred to the Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS) or another form of counselling. Healthcare professionals, Children’s Services, education and careers advisors all have particular expertise that young people should be referred to in order to receive the most appropriate response to their needs.

Local Council

What is your local youth service providing for young people? Are there areas of work where you could support them or work in partnership and share or pool resources? Are your Local Authority looking to commission youth work that you could deliver?

Is your church looking for social action projects? Could you ask your council to suggest projects in your neighbourhood (e.g. removing graffiti, collecting litter, painting fences)?

Do you know who to contact to apply for a licence or get Health and Safety/Environmental Health advice if you run an event? And how much notice is required?

Health providers

There will be services designed particularly for young people in your area. Who should you contact regarding mental health issues? What kinds of services are offered by drugs and alcohol workers? What sexual health services are available for young people? Who can supply information about healthy lifestyles (nutrition and exercise)?

Children's and Adults Care Services

Do you know who to contact regarding safeguarding issues? What is the "out of hours" phone number, both for the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, and for your local statutory teams?

Who would you contact regarding support for a family in crisis? Who provides services for young people who are carers for members of their families/households?

What support services are available for parents in your area?

Youth Offending Team

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are made up of professionals from a range of disciplines so that they are able to offer young offenders a breadth of support. YOTs assess the needs of young offenders provide programmes to address the factors which lead to the young person offending.

There are opportunities for you to get involved with your local youth justice services, such as mentoring, being a youth offender panel member and supporting young people to develop literacy skills. For further information, find the contact details for your local YOT manager.

Police

What kind of relationship do the young people you work with have with the police? How could you help enhance it?

Do you have policies for dealing with drugs, alcohol and weapons? Are the police aware of your policies?

Do you know who your Safer Neighbourhood Team/local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are and do you have direct contact details for them? Have you thought through in what sorts of circumstances you would contact them?

Information Sharing

If you are concerned that a young person may be at risk of significant harm, or has been harmed, you are legally obliged to share that information with a statutory agency for them to investigate; this can be either the police, Children's Services, or the NSPCC.

The importance of information sharing between different agencies who work with the same young people has been highlighted by the tragic deaths of children such as Victoria Climbié and Baby Peter. The procedures for sharing information between agencies are agreed locally. For advice on whether the threshold of significant harm has been reached, and who to contact in your area, phone the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser on 020 7939 9423 / 07982 279713.

Being a Reflective Practitioner

Reflective practice is about learning from life. It involves stopping to think about the significance of our experiences and what they might have to teach us:

- Why did events take the course they did?
- Why did people respond in this way?
- What was I feeling while this was going on, and what lies behind my feelings?
- What can I draw from this experience that I can make positive use of in the future?

Like a great many buzz words the term 'reflective practice' has become something of an irritating whine in the ears of teachers, counsellors, youth workers and clergy alike, which is a shame, because the practice can bring life to projects and practitioners alike.

Some of us like the idea of reflecting on our practice, but how many of us do it in reality? We are products of our culture, busily moving on to the next thing rather than pausing to consider the last one. With so much to be done it's hard to make time to stop and learn from what has taken place. But without such reflection our own development as a person and practitioner begins to suffer. We make the same mistakes and know no more about who we really are. We should build into our job descriptions, timetables and personal disciplines the time to stop and review: to learn from our experiences and those of others, and to further the difficult exploration of ourselves that leads to psychological and spiritual well-being. We do it for ourselves and for the sake of those we serve. We encourage others to also learn and grow by setting an example and by creating that same space for others.

Review Structures

What structures do you have in place that allow you as an individual / with colleagues / as a whole group to think back over events, sessions and encounters with young people?

How often do you take time to do this?

What do you do with the things you learn from such reflection? Does it lead you into further investigation of the issues / to recognise needs in the group you want to address / to seek out more training for yourself / to do things differently next time / into prayer?

How do you record your experiences in planning and delivering services for, and with, young people? What kind of questions are you answering in keeping them?

How often do you review what you have recorded? Do other people review it with you? Should they?

Monitoring and Evaluating

Is your work monitored in any way? Do you invite oversight and critical assessment of your work?

Do you encourage and provide opportunity for feedback from young people / parents / partners in the community / other members of your church?

How do you store this feedback? When do you review it? Does anyone else see it...if so for what purpose? How do you note what you have learnt from the feedback?

Can you identify areas for development in your practice as a youth worker? How will you address these?

Do you recognise personal areas of growth? Where might you get support with these?

Your personal and spiritual development

Having someone objective outside our immediate work situation can be helpful in working through issues that come up in a work context or within life as a whole.

Such a person can help us think not just about the immediate work we do but also about the needs of the person doing it!

- How easy are we finding it to find a balance between work and other commitments?
- Do we make enough space for rest and recreation?
- How does a personal crisis affect us? How do we work through it?
- Where is God within what we are experiencing and feeling?
- How does what's happening now relate to my sense of where my life is going? What direction do I feel I am being drawn in?

External support can take different forms: a work mentor or coach, non-managerial supervision, counselling in relation to a specific life issue, or ongoing spiritual direction

Are you seeking or receiving any form of Spiritual Direction, coaching or non-managerial supervision?

Who asks you difficult questions or reflects with you on your own spiritual journey?

A spiritual director – a guide for your journey with God

[Also called 'spiritual adviser, 'soul friend', 'spiritual accompanier', 'spiritual guide']

As Christians we are called to work for the coming of God's Kingdom of justice, truth and love. Jesus promised that the Spirit of God would be our guide, to show us how we are to do this and to help us grow in the knowledge and love of God.

It's not easy to hear God's voice amongst all the noise of daily life. Sometimes we need the help of a wise and prayerful person to help us understand how God is speaking to us through the people we meet, the events of our lives and what we think and feel.

From earliest Christian times there have been people who've helped others in this way – people who are good listeners and who have experience of guiding others on their journey with God.

WHAT DOES HAVING A SPIRITUAL ADVISER INVOLVE?

A spiritual adviser is someone you meet with on a regular basis to help you look at your life in the light of your relationship with God. How often you meet is something you agree between you, but it's likely to

be something like once every two months. A spiritual adviser is not someone above you, but someone alongside you who will help you listen to and follow the one true guide - the Holy Spirit. What you share with your spiritual adviser is between you and God. He or she will not share anything you say with anyone else unless you want them to.

Spiritual guidance has some things in common with counselling. Both involve listening and becoming more in touch with what is happening in our lives. What makes spiritual guidance different is its purpose: it aims to enable you to listen and respond to the Holy Spirit. It's based on the assumption that you want to grow closer to God and to respond to God's call in your life.

A spiritual adviser will help you look at how the Spirit of God is guiding you, not only in times of prayer but in the whole of life - in your thoughts and feelings, in your relationships with other people, and in events of your life.

He or she will encourage and support you in your life of prayer. You can talk freely about the ups and downs of your relationship with God. He or she may suggest other ways of praying to help you become more aware of how the Spirit of God is at work in your life.

FINDING A SPIRITUAL ADVISER:

Your spiritual adviser might be a man or a woman, a lay person or someone ordained. He or she will be a person experienced in and committed to a life of prayer. It's usually best that your spiritual adviser should not be your vicar, someone you work with, or anyone in your own parish since you're more likely to feel completely free to share with someone who is outside your immediate situation.

Most people who offer spiritual direction have been through an appropriate training course. The first step in finding someone might be to prayerfully ask God to bring someone suitable to mind. Often we know, or have come across someone who we sense is someone we could talk to and who has the necessary qualities to be an effective guide.

Within the diocese there is also a network of people who offer this ministry called SPIDIR. The contact person for SPIDIR is Bidy Taylor, 020 7627 0093 jmandcb.taylor@ukonline.co.uk

Theological Reflection

Theological reflection involves making connections between what we experience, our developing understanding of God, and what it means for us as individuals and as society to be in relationship with God.

Sometimes our experience challenges our previously held convictions; perhaps we sense the God we believe in is too 'small'; we open ourselves to question, to learn and to explore.

From time to time we may recognise our own need for further theological or biblical study.

- When are you able to reflect theologically on your practice? With whom?
- How open are you to be challenged by understandings or approaches that are new or different from your own?
- Is there anything that would help you with this exploration – for example further study, or membership of an ongoing learning group?

'Think about it!'

Homer (Simpson)

Specific Questions and Issues

If you have a specific question about work with young people, then the guide below may be of help. Simply look at the questions and issues and then the information below each question which details some of the matters that need to be considered in answering that question/issue. Clicking on any of the questions or bullet points below will take you to the relevant page in the guide.

- We are thinking about setting up youth work in our Church.
- We have a youth worker and we need to work out if they're doing their job or not.
- We want to actively involve the young people in our area in what we're doing.
- I am a youth worker and I'm thinking about running a residential.
- I'm concerned we might not be fulfilling our legal obligations.
- I'm worried about a child or young person
- I'm worried about a team member's behaviour
- I'm part of a team and I'm sure it could run better.
- I'm thinking about signing up as a volunteer – what should I be looking for in the organisation?
- I am a youth work volunteer and I feel a bit lost.
- I'm struggling with the church side of my work.
- I am a youth worker and I feel very isolated.
- How can I be more connected with other agencies in the Community?

We are thinking about setting up youth work in our Church.

WHAT IS YOUTH WORK?

- Age Range
- Context
- Content
- Mission Statements

WHAT MAKES A GOOD YOUTH WORKER?

- Competencies

WORKING WITH A TEAM

- Recruitment and Employment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS

- Boundaries
- Keeping young people safe and protecting yourself
- What the Diocese offers
- Safeguarding children and young people
- Health and Safety
- Fire Risk Assessment

- Recording
- Data Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Legal requirements and moral obligations

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

- Empowering Young People to represent themselves
- Giving young people responsibility for others: young leaders

WORKING IN A COMMUNITY

- Understanding the Communities of which you are a part
- Understanding the Communities of which young people are a part
- The margins of Community
- Christian Community
- The Interaction of Local and Global Communities

WORKING WITHIN CHURCH STRUCTURES

- Clergy and Laity
- Mission Statement
- Church Calendar
- Liturgy and Lectionary
- Respecting Theological Diversity
- Professional and Confessional Approaches

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- Children's and Adult Care Services
- Information sharing

BEING A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

- Review Structures
- Monitoring and Evaluating
- Spiritual Direction
- Theological Reflection

We have a youth worker and we need to work out if they're doing their job or not.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH WORKER?

WHAT MAKES A GOOD YOUTH WORKER?

- Competencies

WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS

- Boundaries
- Keeping young people safe and protecting yourself
- What the Diocese offers
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- Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Legal requirements and moral obligations

WORKING WITH A TEAM

- Signature Strengths
- Tools for understanding differences of temperament and working styles
- Recruitment and Employment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

WORKING WITHIN CHURCH STRUCTURES

- Clergy and Laity
- Mission Statement
- Church Calendar
- Liturgy and Lectionary
- Respecting Theological Diversity
- Professional and Confessional Approaches

BEING A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

- Review Structures
- Monitoring and Evaluating
- Spiritual Direction
- Theological Reflection

We want to actively involve the young people in our area in what we're doing.

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

- Involving young people
- Empowering Young People to represent themselves
- Giving young people responsibility for others: young leaders

WORKING WITHIN CHURCH STRUCTURES

- Clergy and Laity
- Mission Statement
- Church Calendar
- Liturgy and Lectionary
- Respecting Theological Diversity
- The Margins of Community
- Christian Community
- The Interaction of Local and Global Communities

WORKING IN A COMMUNITY

- Understanding the Communities of which you are a part
- Understanding the Communities of which young people are a part
- The Margins of Community
- Christian Community
- The Interaction of Local and Global Communities

I am a youth worker and I'm thinking about running a residential.

CAMPS AND RESIDENTIALS**WORKING WITH A TEAM**

- Signature Strengths
- Tools for understanding differences of temperament and working styles
- Recruitment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS

- Boundaries
- Keeping young people safe and protecting yourself
- What the Diocese offers
- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Health and Safety
- Fire Risk Assessment
- Recording
- Data Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Legal requirements and moral obligations

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

- Empowering Young People to represent themselves
- Giving young people responsibility for others: young leaders

WORKING WITH GROUPS

- Group Dynamics?
- Models of leading group activities
- Learning Styles & Personality Types
- Working with Behavioural Difficulties
- Conflict Resolution

I'm concerned we might not be fulfilling our legal obligations.

WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS

- Boundaries
- Keeping young people safe and protecting yourself
- What the Diocese offers
- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Health and Safety
- Fire Risk Assessment
- Recording
- Data Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Legal requirements and moral obligations

WORKING WITH A TEAM

- Recruitment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

I'm worried about a child or young person

KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE AND PROTECTING YOURSELF

- What does the Diocese offer?
- What should you expect from your church?
- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Complaints, grievances and disciplinary procedures

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- Children's and Adult Care Services
- Information sharing

I'm worried about a team member's behaviour

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- What does the Diocese offer?
- What should you expect from your church?
- Recording
- Complaints, grievances and disciplinary procedures

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- Children's and Adult Care Services
- Information sharing
- Monitoring and evaluation

I'm part of a team and I'm sure it could run better.

WORKING WITH GROUPS

- Group Dynamics?
- Models of leading group activities
- Learning Styles & Personality Types
- Working with Behavioural Difficulties
- Conflict Resolution

WORKING WITH A TEAM

- Signature Strengths
- Tools for understanding differences of temperament and working styles
- Recruitment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

BEING A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

- Review Structures
- Monitoring and Evaluating
- Spiritual Direction
- Theological Reflection

I'm thinking about signing up as a volunteer – what should I be looking for in the organisation?

WHAT IS YOUTH WORK?

- Age Range
- Context
- Content
- Mission Statements
- What is your role as a Youth Worker?
- What makes a good Youth Worker?

WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS

- Boundaries
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- Safeguarding Children and Young People
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- Data Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Legal requirements and moral obligations

WORKING WITH GROUPS

- Group Dynamics?
- Models of leading group activities

WORKING WITH A TEAM

- Signature Strengths
- Tools for understanding differences of temperament and working styles
- Recruitment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

I am a youth work volunteer and I feel a bit lost.

WHAT IS THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GROUP?

KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE AND PROTECTING YOURSELF

- What does the Diocese offer?
- What can I expect from my church?

WORKING WITH GROUPS

- Group Dynamics?
- Models of leading group activities
- Learning Styles & Personality Types
- Working with Behavioural Difficulties
- Conflict Resolution

WORKING WITH A TEAM

- Signature Strengths
- Tools for understanding differences of temperament and working styles
- Recruitment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

WORKING WITHIN CHURCH STRUCTURES

- Clergy and Laity
- Mission Statement
- Church Calendar
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WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS

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- Recording
- Data Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Legal requirements and moral obligations

I'm struggling with the church side of my work.

WHAT DOES THE DIOCESE OFFER?

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY CHURCH?

WORKING WITHIN CHURCH STRUCTURES

- Clergy and Laity
- Mission Statement

- Church Calendar
- Liturgy and Lectionary
- Respecting Theological Diversity
- Professional and Confessional Approaches

I am a youth worker and I feel very isolated.

WHAT IS THE CYDG?

WORKING WITH A TEAM

- Signature Strengths
- Tools for understanding differences of temperament and working styles
- Recruitment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

WORKING IN A COMMUNITY

- Understanding the Communities of which you are a part
- Understanding the Communities of which young people are a part
- The margins of Community
- Christian Community
- The Interaction of Local and Global Communities

WORKING WITHIN CHURCH STRUCTURES

- Clergy and Laity
- Mission Statement
- Church Calendar
- Liturgy and Lectionary
- Respecting Theological Diversity
- Professional and Confessional Approaches

How do I go about working in local schools?

WORKING WITHIN SCHOOL STRUCTURES

- Relating to schools
- What kind of work?
- Assemblies
- Lessons
- Curriculum
- Counselling/Pastoral care
- Extra-Curricular Activities

- Extended Schools
- Pupil Referral Units
- Supporting the staff or the school as a whole

WORKING IN A COMMUNITY

- Understanding the Communities of which you are a part
- Understanding the Communities of which young people are a part
- The Margins of Community

I've been a youth worker for some time and I'm afraid it's sucking my soul dry.

BEING A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

- Review Structures
- Monitoring and Evaluating
- Spiritual Direction
- Theological Reflection

WORKING WITH A TEAM

- Signature Strengths
- Tools for understanding differences of temperament and working styles
- Recruitment
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Volunteers
- Communication

How can I be more connected with other agencies in the Community?

WORKING IN A COMMUNITY

- Understanding the Communities of which you are a part
- Understanding the Communities of which young people are a part
- The Margins of Community
- Christian Community
- The Interaction of Local and Global Communities

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- Pastoral Care
- Seeking professional input (youth workers as 'sign posters')– Counselling, Health Providers, Social Services.
- Local Council

- Health Providers
- Children's and Adults Care Services
- Youth Offending Team
- Police
- Information Sharing

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Books and Resources

Bradshaw, T. et al (2002). *Worth Doing Well – Guidance and Good practice for Churches and Other Organisations*. Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House.

Download at: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/pubs-worth-doing-well-041109.pdf>

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Safeguarding children

A Safe Church, Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for Safeguarding Children, Adults who may be vulnerable, and responding to Domestic Abuse. A manual for parishes in the Diocese of Southwark (2008, revised 2010), ISBN 0-904129-27-6, downloadable from <http://www.southwark.anglican.org/what/diocesan-policies-procedures>.

Archbishop's Council publications

Protecting all God's children: the child protection policy for the Church of England, 4th edition, published by the Archbishop's Council in 2010.

Safer Recruitment, published by the Archbishop's Council in 2010

Responding to domestic abuse: guidelines for those with pastoral responsibility, published by the Archbishop's Council in 2006

Helpful Web Sites

Grove Youth Series of booklets –

http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/cart.php?target=category&category_id=380

Theory, ideas and practice for youth work and other informal education: www.infed.org

National Youth Agency website: www.nya.org.uk

Career Academies website: www.careeracademies.org.uk

Diocesan Resources

CYDG

Safeguarding:

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

Jill Sandham

Trinity House

4 Chapel Court

London SE1 1HW

020 7939 9423; 07982 279713 (out of hours);

jill.sandham@southwark.anglican.org

Organisations

Relating to children and young people

HELPLINES:

ChildLine

0800 1111; www.childline.org.uk

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

A free 24 hour helpline, provided by the NSPCC, for children and young people to phone or write, free of charge, about problems of any kind.

NSPCC Helpline

0800 800 500; email help@nspcc.org.uk

A free 24 hour helpline for any adult concerned about a child.

Stop it now!

0800 1000 900; www.stopitnow.org.uk

Freephone helpline for confidential advice if you suspect that someone you know is abusing a child, or if you are worried about your own thoughts or behaviour towards children

Bullying UK

www.bullying.co.uk

On-line advice for children and young people about 'Staying safe in Cyberspace' and dealing with bullying via mobile phones.

ORGANISATIONS

NSPCC

Adults helpline 0800 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

HQ Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

Specialises in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children, works with other organisations to improve practice.

4Children (formerly Kids' Club Network)

020 7512 2100

www.4children.org.uk

Works with statutory agencies to ensure joined up support for children and young people locally.

Kidscape

Parentseocally.rt for children

www.kidscape.org.uk

2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH

Provides individuals and organisations with practical skills and resources necessary to keep children safe from harm.

RELATING TO INTERNET SAFETY

Child Exploitation and On-line

Protection Centre (CEOP)

0870 000 3344; www.ceop.gov.uk

33 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2WG

Part of the UK police, dedicated to protect children from sexual abuse. Provides advice for parents, young people and professionals; delivers a ThinkuKnow educational programme.

Childnet International

www.childnet-int.org

Works with others to help make the internet a safe place for children; provides guide to parents.

GetNetWise

www.getnetwise.org

A web-wide partnership to help ensure internet users have safe, constructive, educational and entertaining on-line experiences.

Acknowledgements

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Southwark

C Children
Y and Youth
D Development
G Group