

# FIRST STEPS

## 1.1. IDENTIFYING THE NEED

When considering the setting up of new youth provision, it is essential that you first establish that:

- i). There is a need for this provision within the community
- ii). You are not duplicating any existing provision.

Networking with other providers and with the local community will enable this process to begin. Working in partnership will be essential to the long-term success of the project, as will the need to establish effective working relationships between the young people and the older members of the community.

While you and other members of the adult community will have ideas on *'What young people need'*, young people will have their own ideas. The young people should be fully consulted and involved in the development of both new and existing projects. Young people need to foster ownership over the provision as a member so that in future years, with support and training, they develop into your volunteer workforce.

Effective volunteers are essential to the success of the club/project, and should be chosen because of the skills and experiences they have to offer.

You should attempt to establish the extent of support available in the community and what facilities could be available for you to use.

### When identifying the need:

- **DO**
  - Consult or establish a Youth Committee
  - Visit the area and obtain Community Profiles, where available
  - Listen to young people and the wider community
  - Foster a working relationship between adults and young people
  - Work in partnership with other providers
  - Prepare effectively.
- **DON'T**
  - Promise anything you cannot deliver
  - Be too soft or too hard when dealing with young people
  - Say it can't be done
  - Talk about religion or politics
  - Put yourself in one on one situations.

## 1.2. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The support of the community will be essential for the running, and long-term success, of your provision. Establishing who will be supportive should be carried out as early as possible. These people can provide support to the club/project in many different ways; some by volunteering to run the club, some offer financial help, and others support the idea or events organised by the club.

- **Volunteer Support** - These people offer their time and energy free of charge. A lot of respect should be given to these people; remember without them you would not have a club at all. Volunteers have to go through a similar recruitment process to paid staff; this is to ensure that they are competent and safe to be working with young people.
- **Financial Support** - Money is an important factor in all youth clubs. Make contacts within your Community Council, and County Council, identifying who you can contact to support all applications and requests that you make for financial assistance. Remember to also take advantage of support and events arranged by organisations such as the Local Authority Youth Service.

Creating a good relationship with the local school is a very good way of reaching the largest numbers of young people, essential for consultation or information gathering exercises. One method that could be used for this could be the use of questionnaires. Different questionnaires may be required to gain information from different groups within the community, so you can gain a clear picture of the community's opinion as a whole.

**Below is a list of questions that may be worth asking key-people in the community:**

- i). Do you feel there is adequate youth provision available to young people in your area?
- ii). What activities are already available for young people in the community?
- iii). Are you prepared to help young people in the community?
- iv). How much work do you do with young people within the community?
- v). What issues, connected with young people, are apparent in your community?

### Public Meetings

The best way of ensuring that a public meeting runs without fuss is to be organised. Some arrangements are essential, whilst others are not as important but do demonstrate the commitment and professional attitude of the project. It is important to draw up an agenda for the meeting to ensure that the meeting runs without a hitch, it will also enable the chairman to be able to steer the meeting more effectively. Remember that the Local Authority Youth Service works on your behalf, and should be prepared to help you with planning and holding public meetings.

**Below is a list of issues to consider when planning your meeting:**

- i). Ensure a meeting place that is convenient for most people.
- ii). Ensure you market the meeting by letting local organisations dealing with young people know about the meeting as well as key people, and also put up posters around the village and school to create as much interest as possible.

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- iii). Note every detail carefully - make sure that the date, time and location are obvious on the poster so there are no misunderstandings.
- iv). Decide whether or not you want to offer some sort of refreshments; and if you do fit that time into your agenda. It is probably best to do this at the end of the meeting.

### Agenda (Example)

- Welcome
- Introduce yourself and anyone else you have invited to speak
- Introduce ideas for the project
- Comments and Questions
- Discussion
- Next steps
  - Form a committee
  - List possible committee members
- Any other business
- Tea and coffee