

Why is Shropshire Council consulting on the provision of youth support?

Shropshire Council has been working to review the delivery of youth support in Shropshire. A Scrutiny Task and Finish Group has been exploring the delivery of existing support and good practice in youth provision. A review is necessary because the arrangements currently in place are due to come to an end and decisions need to be taken concerning how youth provision should be delivered in the future to best meet local needs. This local work is taking place alongside a [national review](#) launched on the 10 July 2019 into how local authorities should secure activities and services for young people. With an increase in youth crime, exploitation and demand on Children's Social Care, there is a growing focus nationally, on the work local authorities need to undertake to ensure the most vulnerable young people can access and receive the support they need.

Before any decisions can be taken or future plans developed, Shropshire Council needs to understand the views of local people, children and young people and local services and organisations. This consultation is designed to obtain this important feedback.

What does Shropshire Council hope to achieve?

Through this consultation, Shropshire Council aims to collect information that will allow the council to shape the way youth support and activities are delivered in the future and prioritise future spending. We also hope to explore local needs and how we may enable improvement. Shropshire Council hopes to make the best use of the resources and funding it has, to:

- Target services towards those young people in most need of support including those who are vulnerable or most at risk.
- Ensure qualified youth workers are in place across Shropshire, providing the skills and experience needed to make most difference.
- Work to address emerging social issues and concerns such as youth violence and knife crime, county lines etc.
- Provide a localised youth offer – ensuring there are workers on the ground able to reach young people within the community e.g. schools/colleges, on the streets.
- Build and strengthen the system of support available to meet the needs of young people by linking qualified youth workers to other services and specialist workers.
- Improve the use of information to understand impact and enable investment to build on success.

Shropshire Council would like to propose a model of support to young people that would incorporate both universal, open access groups and more targeted support through outreach work (meeting young people where they are at, in schools and in places where they choose to congregate). Detached youth work is a model of youth work practice, targeted at vulnerable young people, which takes place on young people's own territory such as streets, cafes, parks and pubs at times that are appropriate to them and on their terms.

What changes being proposed?

Shropshire Council is proposing a change in the way youth support is provided in Shropshire. The proposals for change are:

That a new model of youth work is implemented that incorporates, both:

- a) universal, open access groups (open to all, not restricted by appointments or invitations e.g. youth club sessions); and
- b) targeted support (addressing particular issues) through outreach or detached youth work (meeting young people in the community where they gather together and spend time).

The model would include:

- More emphasis placed on working with the most vulnerable young people and addressing issues of concern within communities.
- Youth workers employed to cover an area of Shropshire so they can get to know their communities. It is suggested that a team of 6 workers would be required.
- Development of new local networks where youth workers link to schools/colleges, voluntary sector groups and organisations, town and parish councils etc.
- Development of stronger referral networks between youth workers and specialist providers such as mental health workers, school nurses etc.
- Development of a stronger locality approach where there is more influence and support provided by town councils (and clusters of parish councils).

The aim of the consultation is to get your feedback on these proposals. The surveys ask you what you like and don't like about this proposal as well as a range of other questions designed to understand more about what people living in Shropshire want and need from future youth provision.

When will the consultation close?

The consultation will run for 8 weeks, opening on the 9th September and closing on the 31st October 2019.

Which methods of engagement are being used?

Within the consultation period a mixed method of engagement will be used to obtain as much feedback as possible. Engagement opportunities include:

- Feedback surveys for
 - children and young people
 - stakeholders (e.g. services within the public sector, voluntary sector, town and parish councils etc.)
 - public survey (e.g. for parents/carers)
 - Email feedback options for more detailed comments
 - Meeting discussions and workshops
 - Individual meetings with key stakeholders (available on request)
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How can I get involved?

You can complete a short survey. It should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete depending on how many comments you make. Find the three surveys on the 'How to get involved tab' and select the one most relevant to you here:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/youth-support-consultation/>

You can also provide feedback by email. Please title your email Youth Consultation and email: TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk

You can also provide any comments or other documents for consideration by writing to: Youth Consultation 2019, c/o Shropshire Council, Feedback and Insight Team (1L23), Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY2 6ND

We will also be visiting different stakeholder groups and attending a range of meetings during the consultation period.

Throughout the consultation we will be promoting feedback opportunities through Shropshire Council's website, social media channels and articles within local newsletters and other publications.

How will the feedback be used?

Your feedback will be used to develop a proposal for the future delivery of youth services in Shropshire. The proposal will be presented to Shropshire Council's Cabinet for decision. Work will take place to outline:

- Levels of need in Shropshire and priorities based on an assessment of all available data
 - Any changes needed to respond to the feedback obtained through the consultation
 - A plan of how any changes will be implemented with clear delivery responsibilities, targets, and timescales.
 - An outline of how impact will be measured and future service delivery reviewed.
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When will the results of the consultation be available?

The results of the consultation and proposals for future delivery of youth services will be made to Shropshire Council's Cabinet on 11th December 2019. Papers for Cabinet meetings are public documents and can be found on Shropshire Council's website here:

<http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/cabinet>

What other evidence will be used to inform the new strategy?

Work has been taking place to gather together a wide range of evidence including national research and guidance, data about and from local services, and population data. This information, added to the feedback obtained through the consultation, will help to inform future decision making. Key documents include:

- A local review of youth provision undertaken by The New Saints (TNS), Oswestry.
- Views of young people shared by South Shropshire Youth Forum
- The National Youth Agency and All-Party Parliamentary Group for Youth Affairs' inquiry into Youth Work available here: <https://nya.org.uk/appg-inquiry/>
- A Commons Select Committee report on Serious Youth Violence: <https://www.parliament.uk/commons-select/serious-youth-violence-report/>

National research, evidence and guidance suggests changes are required. The APPG on Youth Affairs; Youth Work Inquiry 2018 recognises that "*over the years youth work has borne*

the brunt of significant spending cuts. Recent events and reports suggest the loss of youth work has had a negative impact on young people and communities. In the face of rapid technological change and major societal challenges we need to look again at what support young people need now and to meet their needs for the future.”

The Government's [Civil Society Strategy](#) 2018 states: “*The Government recognises the transformational impact that youth services and trained youth workers can have, especially for young people facing multiple barriers of disadvantage.*”

The [Youth Work Inquiry](#) recommends there is a “*lead role for the local authority to ensure access to sufficient, quality youth work provision in an area, where youth work is recognised as ‘education’ in its open access provision and in supporting vulnerable young people in its targeted provision*”.

In order to provide Shropshire’s young people with support they need in a modern world – a new youth strategy needs to be created. Shropshire Council would like your feedback to help inform that new strategy.

Who will be involved in the consultation?

We will be promoting the consultation as widely as possible to obtain a diversity of views. We will also take steps to ensure the following stakeholder groups are made aware of how they can participate in the consultation:

- Young people
- Existing providers of youth services
- Schools
- Voluntary and Community Sector organisations (including social enterprise)
- Local partnerships
- Public sector bodies
- Town and Parish Councils
- Housing providers
- Shropshire Council Elected Members and Officers
- And more....

To find out more please email TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk

