

## 21st Century Youth Zones

### A personal view on the essentials for creating the best youth club possible. (Jeremy Glover MBE, Bolton Lads & Girls Club) – July 2009.

A good club is at the centre of the community, with strong leadership and vision – always evolving, never static, pro-active and reactive, innovative, creative and prepared to take risks.

Young People not even at the centre – at the front.

All work with young people is based around YOUTH WORK ethics, values and principles.

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| <b>Location</b>                  | - The right place: town centre; neutral: no territory, therefore, no gang issues<br>- Accessible<br>- Makes a statement. This is what we provide for our young people  |
| <b>Quality</b>                   | - New and purpose-built<br>- The highest possible specification<br>- David Lloyd quality, not a hut at the edge of a gloomy park   |
| <b>Design</b>                    | - The building should be functional<br>- Based on an understanding of how young people engage, socialise and then participate  |
| <b>Welcome/Atmosphere</b>        | - The hardest thing to get right, the easiest to get wrong: it is complex and important – you work at it every day and after being in a club for five minutes, you know if you have got it right or wrong  |
| <b>Voluntary Relationship</b>    | - Must be a completely voluntary relationship: young people come because they want to  |
| <b>Staff</b>                     | - A mix of paid and voluntary staff is essential: the messages which volunteers give to young people can never be over-estimated, particularly for those who have chaotic lives and have had a lifetime of involvement with professionals<br>- All staff and volunteers trained to the highest possible standards<br>- The relationships which develop between Youth Worker and Young Person are central and fundamental |
| <b>Safe</b>                      | - All young people must feel 100% safe and welcome   |
| <b>Activities/Focus</b>          | - Offer a complete range of activities: preferably both arts and sports. But whatever is on offer, aspire to be the highest standard, all should be developmental so young people can 'mess about' or pursue the sport/activity to the highest possible level<br>- Never less than 25 different activities available every evening<br>- Make it impossible for young people not to participate                           |
| <b>Involvement/Participation</b> | - Forums, committees: young people need to have a voice and ownership of the Club  |
| <b>Open</b>                      | - Be open whenever schools are closed: seven days a week, all day Saturday and Sunday  |
| <b>Cheap</b>                     | - A nominal fee and then no extra charges for activities, but the fee is important: charge 40p for four hours of complete access, 39p and you don't get in   |

<b>Inclusive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look at the community you serve and if the membership does not reflect this community, you need to get out there and make sure it does</li> <li>- BME communities</li> <li>- Full involvement of young people with disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>At the centre of your community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A good club should be the cement which holds communities together: it helps to focus on young people and gives individuals (as volunteers) and companies (as sponsors) the opportunity to get involved</li> </ul>
<b>“THE” place where young people go</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Once you have achieved the above ‘core baseline service’ you can then respond to local needs and deliver any projects: young parents; enterprise; attainment; health-related initiatives. Targeted work for the disaffected from a strong universal base</li> </ul>
<b>Inspirational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is everything about the club inspirational: are we encouraging young people to believe in themselves? To succeed, excel and achieve?</li> </ul>
<b>Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not lose the ‘service’ in youth service: the basis of the arrangement should be to ‘serve’ young people and give them what they want, when they want it</li> </ul>
<b>Mentoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I feel this should be an essential element, some young people’s lives are so chaotic and full of problems that a night in the club cannot begin to resolve the issues they face. The provision of a one-to-one mentor makes a huge difference and turns their lives around. We must be able to work in a variety of different ways, which meet the needs of all young people</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highest standards on safeguarding</li> <li>- Must tie in to and be represented on the local safeguarding board</li> </ul>
<b>Private Sector Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Essential that the youth club becomes part of the business scene – source of funds, volunteers and inspiration</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key partners are: local people and families; private sector; council</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing &amp; PR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key ingredient and often overlooked, same requirement as any other business</li> </ul>
<b>“Young People Only”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Never dual use – it never works</li> </ul>
<b>Other Key Ingredients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residential Programme</li> <li>- Opportunities to volunteer</li> <li>- Fun</li> <li>- Challenging</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership/ Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is critical. Building something is one thing, ensuring sustainability is another. Private sector involvement is critical as is an agreed approach for funding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council 40%</li> <li>- Private Sector 25%</li> <li>- External Funding 25% (Trusts, Lottery etc)</li> <li>- Young People 10%</li> </ul> </li> </ul>