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# THE NEW COMMISSIONING MODEL OF SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN SURREY

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## EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### 1. EVALUATION APPROACH

The Surrey County Council approach to commissioning Services for Young People (SYP) has already achieved a national profile. Its ambitious scope in completely decommissioning and recommissioning relevant services and its concentration on improved outcomes for young people have made it a focus for attention not only for young people's services elsewhere but also for all public services seeking to move to a more outcome-based approach to commissioning services.

*Governance International* and *INLOGOV* were commissioned by Surrey CC in February 2014 to undertake an evaluation of the decommissioning and recommissioning process in the period leading up to 2012, the experience of

the new services to date and the implications for the next round of commissioning, which will start during 2014.

The evaluation is based on a meta-analysis of secondary data supplied by the project team of SYP, supplemented by primary data collection through interviews with key stakeholders and collection of further documentation from them. It has brought together evidence on how relationships between young people, commissioners, service providers, partners and local communities have changed in the recommissioning process and what improvements have been achieved to outcomes for young people and service efficiency for Surrey County Council and its partners.

### 2. FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

Looking overall, this evaluation has demonstrated that the recommissioning of Services for Young People has produced outstanding results to date. The major improvements in outcomes include:

- a reduction of 60% in the number of young people who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) in Surrey (so that it is now the lowest in England);
- a 90% successful progression to education, training or employment from young people at risk of becoming NEET who received support from the Year 11/12 Transition commission;
- a 90% reduction in first time entrants of young people to the criminal justice system (the lowest rate of first time entrants in England and the 7th lowest use of custody out of all local authorities in England and Wales);
- a 4% increase in young people aged 16–18 starting apprenticeships since 2011 (In contrast to a decrease of 14% in England during the same period) and the fastest growing rate of apprenticeship opportunities in England;
- 290 young people who presented as homeless have been placed in safe accommodation since November 2012 and youth homelessness in Surrey is now at a record low.

Moreover, these outcome improvements have been focused on the priority groups of young people identified by the council. For example, a high proportion of young people engaged in youth centre activities are in higher need groups – in 2012–13, 37% had SEND (Special Needs and Disabilities), 20% were NEET or re-engaging, 17% were identified at risk of NEET, 16% were Children in Need, and 200 were young people who had offended.

Some of these outcome improvements can be given a monetary value. The 124 fewer NEET young people in 2012–13 compared to 2011–12 have been estimated to have resulted in a £7m saving to the public purse (using estimates based upon York University, 2010). Moreover, the reduction in out-county placements in Independent Specialist Colleges from 126 to 90 in 3 years has not only improved education outcomes but also avoided a £2m annualised cost to Surrey County Council.

These radical improvements were achieved whilst reducing expenditure by £4.5m or 25% between 2009 and 2013. In spite of this budget reduction, frontline services were improved – for example, by 2013 the number of professionals working directly with vulnerable young people had actually risen, compared to 2009. Again, 26 youth centres have achieved the National Youth Agency Quality Mark

Level 1, demonstrating a standard equivalent to an Ofsted rating of 'good' (no Surrey youth centre had secured this rating before) and surveys showed high satisfaction by young people with the new centres.

However, the findings from the evaluation also highlight a number of key areas for development, which could lead to further improvements in outcomes for young people through the next round of commissioning for April 2015.

## 2.1. EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESS FROM APRIL 2009 – DECEMBER 2011 (PHASE 1)

### OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

The journey to the recommissioning of SYP in 2012 actually started in 2009. The new holistic approach to the wellbeing of young people, with the focus on PETE (Participation in Education, Training or Employment) instead of NEET, represented a unique model in relation to services for young people in the UK. The overwhelming view of interviewees was that the overall approach had been the right direction to take and that this initial phase of the transformation process had, on balance, been a success. However, a number of people who had been involved in this ambitious journey from the very beginning thought that the process had sometimes felt too rushed and would have benefitted from better communication.

### EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE IN PHASE 1 STRENGTHS

SYP have responsibilities for all young people – but their priority in designing the new approach was to focus on the most vulnerable young people.

Given the major budget cuts which the service faced and the short time frame within which changes had to be made, strong leadership from the top was needed and was provided from start to end of the transformation process. This leadership was perhaps the single most important reason for the success of this phase of the transformation and its ability to surmount the many constraints which were faced, including unhelpful aspects of national policy, local political concerns, and council policies on issues such as staffing terms and conditions, calculation of service overheads, procurement procedures and varying levels of trust between the council and the local third sector. Importantly, the top management team which was able to exercise this leadership was seen to have widened over time.

Given the level of uncertainty involved, it was inevitable that many staff members were concerned about the effect of the new models on them (including, for some, the effect on their jobs). In these circumstances, it was remarkable that so many were prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to the proposed changes.

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

SYP are now much more effectively targeted than previously but the impacts on inequality, which are likely to be much higher than before, are not specifically measured and reported.

Given the time pressures during the original recommissioning process, consultation with partners and other stakeholders was often under substantial time pressure, so that they did not have as much opportunity to shape the new model as was originally hoped.

There was a need for more leadership from other levels in SYP, rather than just from key figures at the top of the hierarchy. However, some interviewees were uncomfortable that staff in SYP already demonstrated too much independence ('You can never be sure they will do what their management tells them'), so this could have a downside.

### EVALUATION OF CO-PRODUCTION IN PHASE 1 STRENGTHS

Young people were involved throughout the process to shape the new service model and the recommissioned services, although the extent and quality of involvement varied.

### AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT

The longstanding experience of co-production in youth restorative justice might have been drawn upon more in designing the new co-production approach across SYP.

### EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES IN PHASE 1 STRENGTHS

Phase 1 of the transformation process was successful in orienting SYP towards outcomes as demonstrated by key outcome indicators.

The key to the new approach was its holistic nature, focusing on the needs of individual young people through case management.

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The outcomes orientation which was initiated in Phase 1 was not fully implemented in the models which emerged for services – there remained a desire to see 'bodies through the door'.

It did not prove possible during Phase 1 to engage fully all of the external partners and stakeholders who were relevant to outcomes improvement for young people. This is something which the next round of commissioning should be able to remedy.

#### EVALUATION OF EFFICIENCY IN PHASE 1 STRENGTHS

The preparation of business cases for the new services was meticulous and comprehensive, with creative approaches being sought on how overheads in the service might be treated differently and how different business models might result in different net costs to the service.

The example of SYP has provided a high profile and very valuable template in Surrey County Council for how radical change can be managed positively, while simultaneously undertaking substantial budget cuts.

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In order that providers have maximal stability, opportunity to innovate and to get these innovations to work, longer term relationships such as five year contracts are desirable.

In the commissioning approach which emerged in Phase 1, there were quite separate programmes, each with a number of contracts – this gave clear focus to the programmes but it did tend to divide certain activities artificially, and also made it more difficult for services to work together.

In spite of the major efforts made in market development, there was still some concern that more high-quality providers might have been attracted, while not undermining the local voluntary sector. Moreover, market management might have given more attention to encouraging the evolution of more micro-providers.

### 2.2. EVALUATION OF THE RECOMMISSIONED SERVICES FROM JANUARY 2012 TO DATE (PHASE 2)

#### EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE IN PHASE 2 STRENGTHS

*Strategy and vision of partnerships:* In most services, there has been a strong alignment of partners around an agreed strategy, which was seen to be clear and ambitious.

*Partnership relationships:* There was a general agreement by providers that there is now mutual trust and a good working relationship, although this had often taken time to achieve.

*A detailed performance and quality management system:* This has promoted clarity of attribution of benefits and costs in relation to each of the externalised services and in light of the likely risks. Interviewees also pointed to the Quality Mark system as a valuable process for ensuring quality and guiding the dialogue between commissioners and providers – it has enabled clarity of expectations, and has justified keeping to simple arms-length relationships, where quality was clearly being achieved

#### AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT

The performance management system was so detailed that some providers felt it narrowed down their scope for innovation, even though SYP staff had tried to make clear that it was meant to be only the starting point for ‘conversations’ about performance, not a straitjacket.

#### EVALUATION OF CO-PRODUCTION IN PHASE 2 STRENGTHS

*Commitment to co-production:* There is significant commitment to and some real enthusiasm for the concept of co-production across Surrey County Council, third sector providers and local partners, although it has become obvious that there is not yet a fully shared understanding of what co-production means for SYP and how it can be translated into everyday working relationships between public services and young people, their families and social networks.

*Bold experimentation with co-commissioning:* Surrey County Council is to be congratulated for having the courage to involve young people in the commissioning process of rather complex services, such as the Local Prevention Framework. However, there were different views on the extent to which young people have been involved in the commissioning process and how successful the co-commissioning of the LPF has been from a co-production point of view.

*Harnessing the ideas of young people:* Many interviewees suggested that co-design of SYP is relatively widely practiced as evident in the youth platforms *WeareSurge* or *U-Explore*. In Youth Centres, in particular, many services are shaped with and by young people, although this does depend on the youth worker.

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

*An unused potential – peer support for and by young people in Surrey CC:* While some interviewees suggested that some young people had taken on a leadership role in their network and provided advice to other young people on an ad-hoc basis, there has not been a lot of emphasis on the development of peer support.

*Developing creative forms of co-assessment with young people:* Most interviewees suggested that co-assessment with young people needs to be developed further using the potential of social media and other creative forms of assessing outcomes and service quality.

## EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES IN PHASE 2 STRENGTHS

*Major improvement in results:* Outstanding increases in outcomes were achieved during Phase 2 – a 60% reduction in NEETs (to become the lowest in England), a 90% decrease in first-time entrants to the criminal justice system, a 4% increase in young people aged 16–18 starting apprenticeships since 2011 (in contrast to a decrease of 14% in England during the same period), and high satisfaction levels in surveys of young people about the new youth centres. By 2013, the number of professionals working directly with vulnerable young people had actually risen, compared to 2009.

*‘From NEET to PETE’:* A high proportion of the performance indicators monitored in SYP focus directly on demonstrating whether the move from NEET to PETE was being achieved and, if not, why not. Moreover, the development of the RONI (Risk of NEET Indicator) approach, where Surrey has been one of the leading authorities in the country, has been an important step in identifying intermediate stages on the way to NEET.

*Understanding cause-and-effect:* Surrey chose the highly innovative route of developing logframes for each of its SYP programmes – a very rigorous approach to demonstrating the cause-and-effect relationships between the intervention and the results which it achieves. This is the most developed and thorough example of its application which we have seen in local government.

## AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

*Inconsistent interpretation of outcomes framework:* While for some senior managers the key outcome to strive for is employability, other senior managers interpret the outcomes framework in a more holistic manner and consider other outcomes for young people also to be important.

*Lack of understanding about the implications of the outcomes framework for front-line staff:* The interviews made evident that the outcomes framework has not become an operational reality for all front-line staff who deal with young people on a daily basis.

## EVALUATION OF EFFICIENCY IN PHASE 2

At the same time as the major improvements in outcomes in SYP, major budget decreases have occurred – a £4.5m reduction, representing 25% of the budget. This illustrates the level of efficiency improvement which has been achieved. It is more difficult, however, to separate out the influence of specific efficiency drivers. In most services a number of these efficiency drivers have occurred together, so that their influence has been simultaneous.

## 3. LESSONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND NEXT STEPS IN PHASE 3

The findings from this evaluation provide a number of lessons for improvement in the next round of commissioning of SYP, which will be Phase 3 in the strategic transformation process. They include:

### GOVERNANCE ISSUES

1. There will be a need for a different leadership style to keep the transformation process on course, with more leadership being shown throughout SYP in order to continue to promote and embed innovation. However, if a new round of radical change is intended, e.g. to give co-production by young people a much larger role in SYP or to greatly increase the level of efficiency in existing services, then there will remain a need for strong and co-ordinated leadership from the top of the service, both politically and organisationally.
2. The role of the third sector as partners, not just external providers, needs to be built more explicitly into the commissioning process.
3. There is a need for more interactive working with providers in service design and improvement of partnerships.
4. The level of detail in specifications for commissioned services and performance management frameworks needs to be reconsidered, as it is currently very high. Where outcomes-based contracts are agreed, these specifications may need to be made much looser to allow appropriate experimentation and creativity.
5. Communications – internally and externally – are fundamentally important. Although a very intense communications campaign was launched and sustained in the first round of recommissioning, there

was much misinformation and a high level of misunderstanding, even amongst many elected members and certainly amongst many of the staff affected. This is less likely to be a problem next time round but it will still need careful attention

6. Website approaches and social media have not been as successful as initially hoped, so there is now a need to rethink and try a wider variety of approaches which will more successfully engage both young people and professionals working with them, with appropriate changes to the communications strategies and protocols of the Council and its partners.

#### OUTCOMES ISSUES

7. It should be possible in the next round of commissioning to set up contracts in line with the new outcomes framework (e.g. employability, resilience, safety, community engagement, etc.). This will give the opportunity for a broader range of activities to be promoted within the contracts, so that a wider range of outcomes can be successfully addressed.
8. A further consequence of moving to the new outcomes framework may be that outcomes can be prioritised at local level, through some local governance arrangements (e.g. Local Youth Task Groups). This might even allow a local tendering process against these priority outcomes, with relatively few constraints (except for pointing out local assets like Youth Centres). It might even be possible for a wider range of local authority commissioning managers to join in this process, allowing some of their budgets to be used for joint commissioning decisions at neighbourhood level or in joint commissioning exercises with priority target groups.
9. It will be important to pay increased attention to 'transitions' as a focus of SYP activity, which will mean giving more attention to the outcomes which are prioritised by Adult Services in SCC, and exploring an increased role for inter-generational initiatives.

#### CO-PRODUCTION ISSUES

10. There will be a need for a more systematic approach to user and community co-production, embedded within both commissioning and contracting.
11. This is likely to require the production and implementation of co-production toolkits for different SYP programmes, both to standardise understanding of co-production and to allow new co-production initiatives to be designed and implemented quickly within SYP by staff and young people.
12. It may even be appropriate to consider community budgeting in some areas where there may be access to extra resources – e.g. Walton, where a local charity has a capital and revenue budget which might be appropriate as a starting point for pooling budgets between agencies. This would allow local people to have some say in the prioritising of the spending from the pooled budget.

#### EFFICIENCY ISSUES

13. There is a high level of transactions costs in dealing with third sector partners – there is a need to consider how to reduce these, if possible.
14. The role of SCC staff transfers needs to be reconsidered – these have had a mixed reaction, with some providers coming to value the staff transferred in but some providers continuing to believe that this has been an unwelcome imposition.
15. There is a potential for more flexibility in the 'model' in the future (e.g. on issues such as whether some Youth Centres might be allowed to open before 16.00). This would not only allow more efficient ways of operating to be adopted in specific locations but would allow experimentation from which the whole service could learn.

# *Part One*

## **EVALUATION APPROACH**

# I. EVALUATION APPROACH

## 1. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

Surrey County Council commissioned INLOGOV and Governance International in February 2014 to undertake an evaluation of the new commissioning model for services for young people (SYP) and set out lessons for the next round of commissioning.

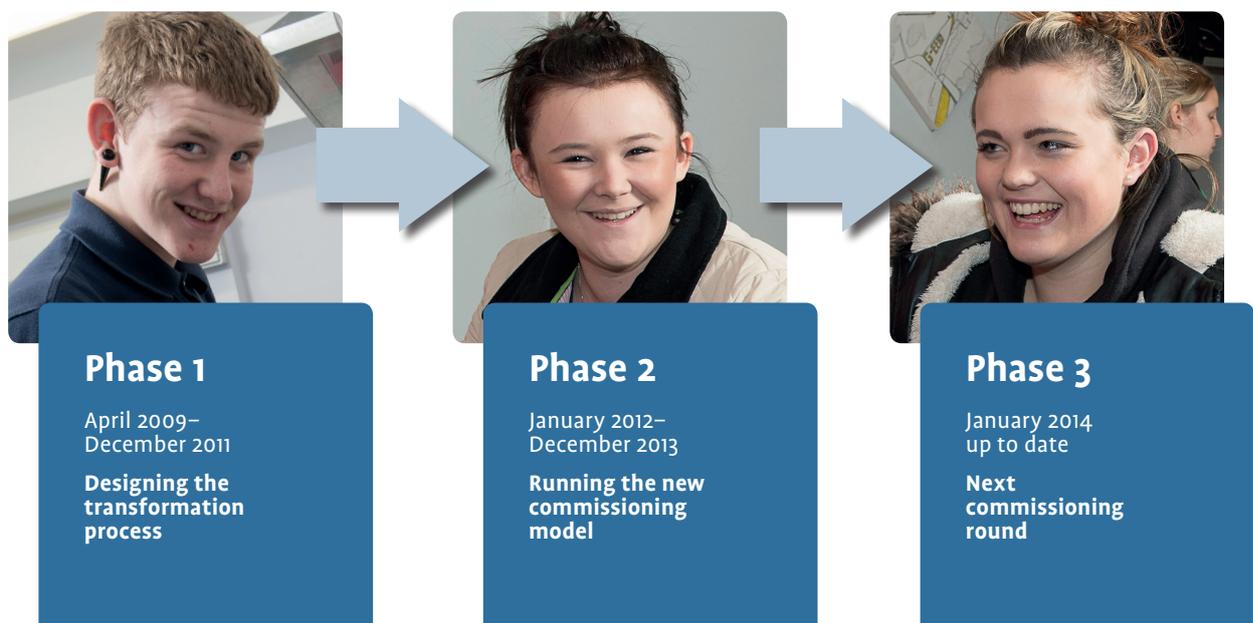
**Figure 1: The purposes of the evaluation**

- evaluate the strategic transformation process of SYP, undertaken between April 2009 and December 2011, which led to a change from a traditional youth service to a unique model;
- evaluate the performance of the new model from January 2012 to December 2013;
- evaluate the suitability of the design of the new model to meet identified needs and achieve the required outcomes for young people;
- evaluate the effectiveness and integrity of this new model, using existing performance information and internal review data;
- highlight key areas for future improvement and learning to inform de-commissioning / commissioning decisions;
- highlight innovation and creativity in commissioning and market design; and
- evaluate the current re-commissioning project.

Source: Tender brief of Surrey County Council

This external evaluation supplements a comprehensive internal review undertaken by Chris Tisdall and Rich Stockley in December 2013 (referred to henceforward as 'Internal Review 2013'). Consequently, it focuses in particular on the experience of key stakeholders with the new commissioning model to date and distils the lessons learnt for the next round of commissioning. It therefore is mainly centred on Phase II of the change management process of SYP to assess the performance of the new commissioning model from January 2012 to December 2013. It also takes into account the lessons learnt from Phase I between April 2009 and December 2011, which led to a change from a traditional youth service to a highly innovative model of improving outcomes for young people.

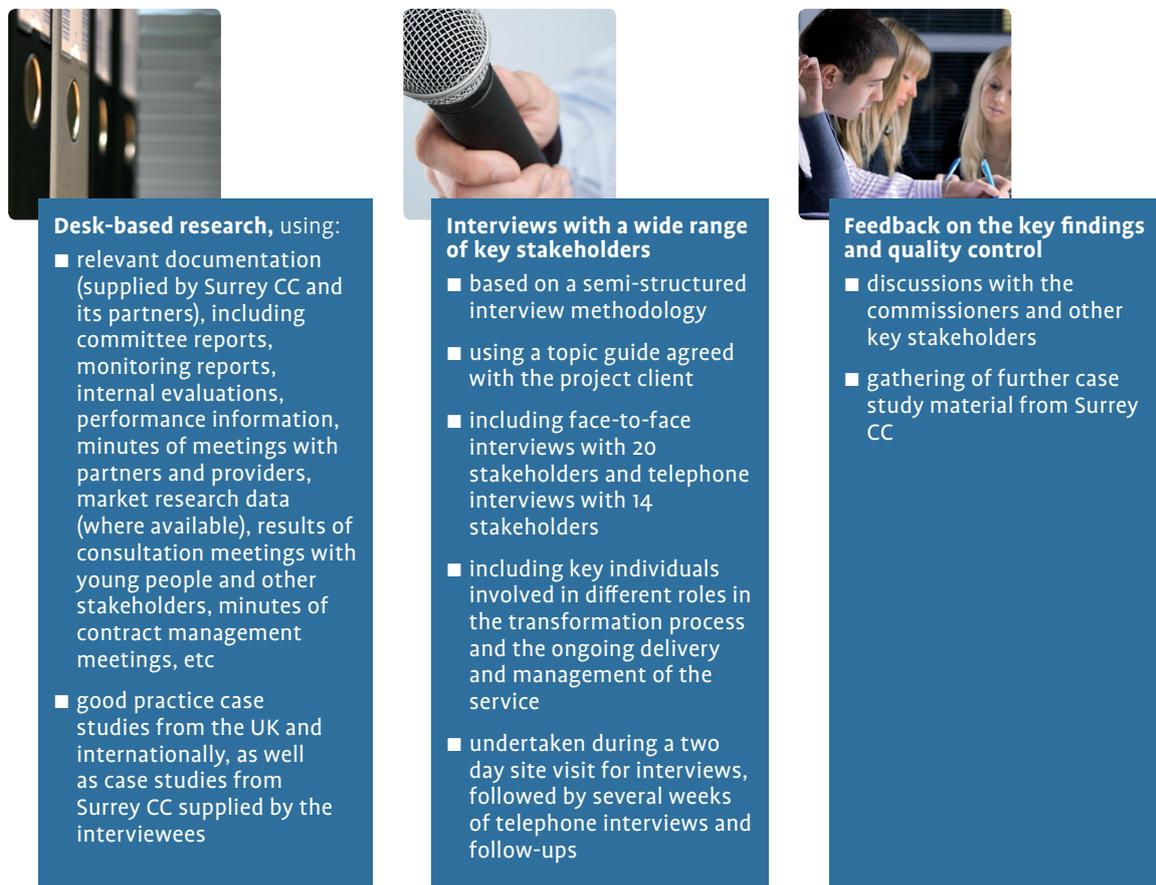
**Figure 2: Phases of the transformation process of SYP in Surrey County Council**



## 2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The managers and staff of Services for Young People (SYP) in Surrey County Council are strongly committed to an evidence-based approach and have undertaken a range of surveys with young people and internal evaluations. Given this baseline, we have therefore relied in this external evaluation on a meta-analysis of secondary data supplied by the project team of SYP, supplemented by primary data collection through interviews with key stakeholders and collection of further documentation from them.

**Figure 3: Key elements of the evaluation**



A draft report was submitted in April 2014 and circulated to the commissioning team to gather feedback. Following comments and discussions with the commissioning and project team, this evaluation report has been completed in July 2014.

### 3. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The analysis of the evidence gathered is based on the evaluation framework set out in Figure 4. This framework captures both qualitative evidence on HOW relationships between young people, commissioners, service providers, partners and local communities have changed in the recommissioning process and quantitative evidence in terms of improved outcomes for young people and improved service efficiency to answer the question of WHAT has changed.

**Figure 4. Evaluation framework**

Evaluation Criteria/ Stakeholders	Governance	Co-production	Outcomes	Efficiency
Young People	STAGE ONE	<b>Baseline assessment</b>		
Commissioners	STAGE TWO	<b>Define expected results</b>		
Service providers	STAGE THREE	<b>Levers, gaps and obstacles</b>		
Partners	STAGE FOUR	<b>Recommended responses</b>		
Community	STAGE FIVE	<b>Change management</b>		

For each of the criteria 'Governance, Co-production, Outcomes, Efficiency', we have sought to establish how the recommissioned services were expected to improve results from the baseline position, the levers, gaps and obstacles which helped or hindered the achievement of these results, the responses which emerged as necessary over time and the change management processes which were undertaken to ensure the success of the recommissioned services.

Each of the criteria have been assessed on robust and tested evaluation frameworks.

#### 3.1. HOW THE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE WAS ASSESSED

Given that collaboration and partnerships are key to recommissioning SYP in Surrey SYP, we have based our evaluation of governance on the INLOGOV partnership evaluation framework, which has been built up from analysis of eight commonly used partnership assessment toolkits (see Table 1). In applying this assessment framework, we have used the information available from the documentation and we have also sought to collect relevant evidence from the interviews. However, evidence was not available on all these principles in relation to all the partnerships through which the recommissioned SYP are being delivered. We have therefore agreed with the project lead at Surrey CC a list of key players in the priority partnerships and we have focused our interviews mainly on assessing with these stakeholders the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships, and the implications for the next round of recommissioning of SYP.

**Table 1. Partnership assessment framework for assessing the quality of governance**

Dimension	Principle
<b>Vision</b>	Purpose is clear, ambitious but realistic Clarity of motivations, roles, capabilities and contributions
<b>Strategy</b>	Alignment of partners and policies around agreed strategy Commitment, ownership and responsibility of partners towards the partnership Focus on cultural transformation, synergy, efficiencies and outcomes
<b>Structure and process</b>	Sufficient organisational processes and procedures that foster collaboration Availability of appropriate financial and human resources
<b>Relationships</b>	Partnership is participative and empowering Culture of collaboration trust and openness Partnership is continually engaging with others, developing and learning
<b>Results</b>	Defines success, monitors and reports its performance Clear attribution of benefits, risks and blame

Source: Jeffares, Sullivan and Bovaird, 2013.

In those services where partnership working was not key to the working of the new commissioning model, we explored how the new models sought to assure the expected levels of results, both from the documentation and from our interviews with stakeholders.

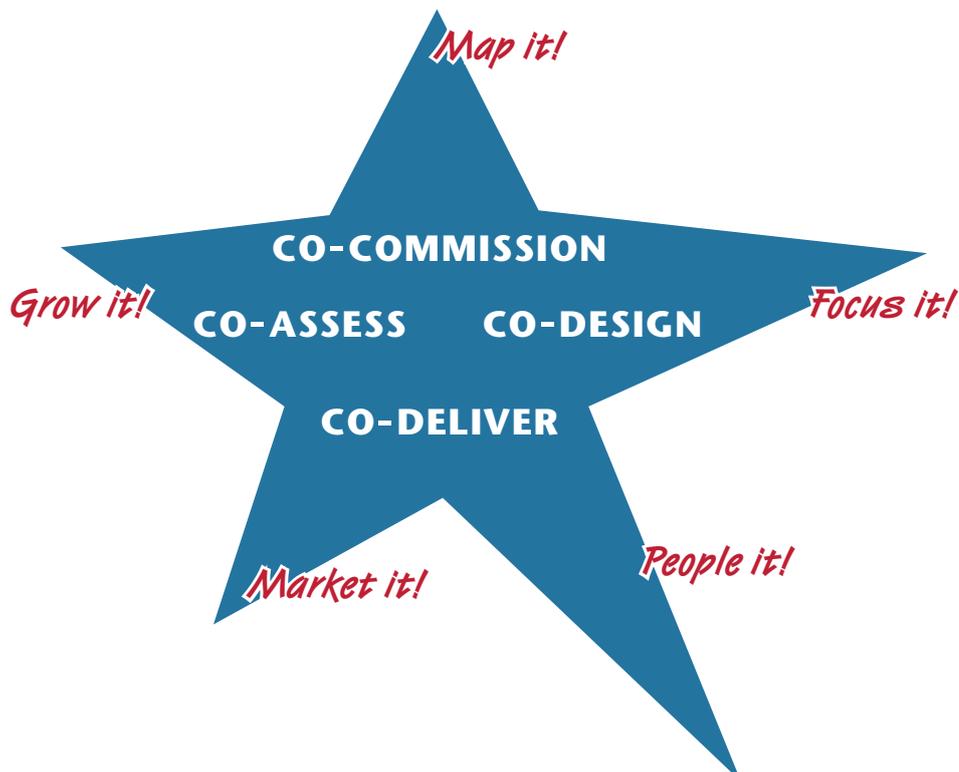
### 3.2. HOW THE LEVEL AND QUALITY OF CO-PRODUCTION WAS ASSESSED

A key element of the SYP recommissioning has been co-production. Surrey CC uses the *new economics foundation* (2009) definition of co-production:

“Co-production means designing and delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours.”

In order to evaluate how co-production has worked in practice in the recommissioning process, we used the *Governance International Co-production Star* (Figure 5), which has been developed and tested with local authorities in England and Scotland.

**Figure 5. The Governance International Co-production Star**



In the centre of the Co-production Star are the four main approaches of co-production – co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery and co-assessment. This allows us to assess how WIDELY co-production has been rolled out in the service cycle. The outer ring sets out a five stage model of implementation to assess how DEEPLY co-production is embedded in the organisation or partnership. The co-production journey starts with the stock-taking of co-production approaches (*Map It!*), how focused co-production has been on achieving priority outcomes (*Focus It!*), whether it has involved the right people in organisations and communities (*People It!*), whether it has been promoted and incentivised appropriately to ensure it works well (*Market It!*), and, to what extent it has been mainstreamed through management systems (e.g. through building it into contracts, performance management systems, competency frameworks, etc.) (*Grow It!*).

### 3.3. HOW OUTCOMES WERE ASSESSED

The assessment of outcomes was mainly based on the information provided in a comprehensive set of 'logframes' provided by Surrey CC. These cause-and-effect models, developed for all services to be commissioned, showed clearly which desired outcomes were expected to result from the recommissioned services, against which actual performance achieved could be measured. The quantitative data are supplemented by qualitative information from interviewees and 'stories' from young people and staff describing the transformation of personal outcomes.

### 3.4. HOW EFFICIENCY WAS ASSESSED

Efficiency has been assessed through exploring the extent to which partnerships or service contracts were able to achieve economies in operation (particularly economies of scale or economies of scope but, where appropriate, also economies of learning). This was done through analysis of the documentation and discussion with the interviewees. Given the large budget reductions which were managed successfully by the service from the start of 2012, while protecting and even improving outcomes, it is clear that major efficiency savings were indeed achieved. However, the mechanisms by means of which these occurred were generally not spelled out in partnership agreements or service contracts, and were not always clear to our interviewees. Consequently, evidence on the source of efficiency savings was often rather sparse in this evaluation.

# *Part Two*

## **FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION**

## II. FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

In Part Two, we report our findings for the two phases of the strategic transformation process:

- Phase 1: April 2009 – December 2011
- Phase 2: January 2012 to date

### 1. EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESS FROM APRIL 2009 – DECEMBER 2011 (PHASE 1)



#### 1.1. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

This was a very comprehensive process which affected not just the staff providing the traditional in-house services but also the voluntary sector and key partners working with SYP. As one interviewee commented: “Great listening to young people!”

The key elements of the transformation process included:

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT :** One in Ten was a high quality, brilliantly presented document which set out a very clear and convincing case of the need for a different approach to SYP in Surrey. It employed extensive data gathering and analysis exercises. It brought together, for the first time, a comprehensive picture of the number and characteristics of vulnerable young people in Surrey and it provided an analysis of their needs and how these needs were inter-related. It therefore formed a platform for the decision to focus on ‘from NEET to PETE’ as the key to improving life chances of young people in Surrey. Most importantly of all, it concluded that “Although the numbers of young people who are vulnerable may compare favourably in the national context, these can be viewed as unacceptable in a county as successful and ambitious as Surrey.” This was the analytical starting point for the highly ambitious transformation process which followed.

**OUTCOMES DEVELOPMENT :** In practice, the main outcome incorporated in the approach was the desire to move young people from NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) to PETE (Participation in Education, Training or Employment). Recently, however, a strong emphasis has been developed on supporting ‘employability’ of young people more generally based on the social theory that ‘employability’ drives a whole range of other outcomes such as health.

**OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND BUSINESS CASE :** It was clear that a great deal of intensive thought went into the preparation of appropriate business cases for the new services. We saw evidence that much of the early discussion, especially at an informal level, was around how overheads in the service might be treated differently and how different business models might result in different net costs to the service, simply through more imaginative

treatment of the cost and accounting information. Developing from this, there was clearly an in-depth exploration of how the business case would stack up for different balances of the public-third sector mix in SYP.

**MARKET MANAGEMENT:** A great deal of thought went into the development of a wider market for the provision of young people's services. A key marker of the determination to change the characteristics of the marketplace was the commitment to a much longer period of funding stability for the recommissioned services. Another challenge was to explain the new service model to service providers. A survey was carried out with service providers to assess their understanding of outcomes and the concept of co-production. This was followed by a session with providers to brief them on key principles of co-production. Moreover, this development of a wider market has continued to be a focus since the new commissions started in January 2012 - for example, during 2013 there was a local recommissioning process for LPF and the R4W programme and Individual Prevention Grants were introduced. However, some senior staff in SYP still feel that more high-quality providers need to be available in the Surrey market.

**PROCUREMENT:** The procurement process continued to be refined during the past five years, with more emphasis given to achieving bespoke services for different target groups of service users and, in more recent times, greater attention to the social value created, in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. Where the procurement process was in danger of becoming too bureaucratic, e.g. in the two-stage process originally proposed for LPF contracts, this was later recognised and a more streamlined one-stage procurement process replaced it. Nevertheless, the process remained onerous for many providers, especially in the third sector – one of whom commented: “The procurement process nearly killed us – a number of high quality staff spent half a year mainly on this!”

**POLITICAL DECISION MAKING AND PRIORITISATION:** Strong political backing was a key element of the transformation process. The target of ‘Zero NEETs’ set by a previous Leader of the Council gave important symbolic impetus to SYP transformation. The move to more targeted provision was potentially a tricky one, given the commitment of local elected members to their patch. Another challenge was the introduction of competitive tenders which meant that even social enterprises with long-standing relationships with specific councillors would have to compete in the market and run the risk of not being awarded the contract.

**CHANGE MANAGEMENT:** Given the major budget cuts which the service faced and the short time frame within which changes had to be made, strong leadership from the top was essential to get the process going, to drive its high level of ambition and to overcome the various problems which emerged during the process. The professional and managerial barriers were huge – as one interviewee said: “We have taken three major groups of professional workers and required them all to focus on quality of life of vulnerable young people”. Throughout the transformation process, the leadership from the top showed great clarity of vision, a determination to bring and keep all stakeholders together, steadfastness of purpose in the face of barriers and creativity in dealing with the unexpected difficulties which arose. This leadership was perhaps the single most important reason for the success of this phase of the transformation.

## 1.2. OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

The journey to the recommissioning of SYP in 2012 actually started in 2009. Most interviewees described this as having been an exciting time, during which they had faced the challenge of designing and bringing to fruition some radically new ways of delivering services for young people, several of which had never been tried in Surrey CC. As one interviewee said: “This has been the best project I’ve ever been involved in my career”. Moreover, the new holistic approach to the wellbeing of young people with the focus on PETE instead of NEET represented a unique approach to services for young people in the UK. The overwhelming view of interviewees was that the overall approach represented the right direction to take and that this initial phase of the transformation process had, on balance, been a success.

This new direction of travel was not always popular, either within the Council or with external partners. It was a big achievement to market this new vision both politically and internally in SYP. Due to the strong leadership from the top

there was a widespread understanding of what the new SYP model wished to achieve, which might otherwise have been regarded as too radical to succeed. The fact that the process involved no loss of posts at the front line was important in securing buy-in from staff who might otherwise have shown more resistance.

However, a number of people who had been involved in this ambitious journey from the very beginning thought that the process had sometimes felt too rushed and would have benefitted from better communication. Some suggested that the Council too often put a lot of effort into telling partners how it would consult, rather than allowing them to shape the process. Others complained that some Council consultations still have unrealistically short deadlines or take place at inappropriate times, e.g. in school holidays. However, other interviewees pointed to 'signs of hope' – e.g. Woking BC now has a joint committee with Surrey County Council which considers young people's issues, including the local budget – perhaps the first example in the UK and potentially a joined-up way of keeping everyone in touch. In developing an improved communications approach, learning from this Phase 1 experience, Surrey CC might look to some best practice examples internationally about how to get buy-in from staff and other stakeholders. The Mannheim experience seems especially relevant, as it involved a similar scope and pace of change to the SYP transformation.

#### MINI-CASE STUDY: The imaginative communication strategy of Mannheim Council in Germany

The City of Mannheim (about 325,000 population) in South-West Germany is one of the most ambitious local authorities in Europe when it comes to transforming public services. Its programme Change Squared [www.change2.de](http://www.change2.de) (which alludes both to the scale of the transformation programme but also to the famous baroque grid-like layout of the inner city, the "City of Squares") is widely admired in German local government for its outcome orientation. What makes Mannheim's transformation approach so interesting for SYP in Surrey is its strong focus on internal communication to get the buy-in of staff and to assess staff satisfaction with the change management process.

In Mannheim this involved the introduction of new forms of communication across services. A roadshow, based around the concept of a "mobile bar" (called "veränderBAR" in German, which is clever word play, which we might translate as The ChangeAbility Bar) invited managers and staff to engage in dialogue. The directly elected mayor of Mannheim Council Peter Kurz invited a randomly selected group of staff to have a conversation with him on a regular basis. A new staff journal reported regularly on the new projects. Furthermore, several staff and customer surveys were conducted to assess levels of satisfaction.

In Surrey, SYP might even go further and build on the existing online newsletter, so that it is largely produced by young people, to report about new projects and what they mean for young people. This would not only improve communications but also give young people a role as co-assessors of the transformation process. Furthermore project managers might be invited to contribute to the newsletter which would give staff a voice and highlight their achievements and roles as 'transformation champions'.

The fact that the new commissioning model had been partly designed by an external consultant, who was visibly selling his ideas to internal decision makers, inevitably meant that some staff and other stakeholders felt that their voices were not sufficiently heard and that they had only limited scope for shaping the new model. Some of the lessons learnt during this first round of decommissioning and recommissioning, particularly in terms of clear and regular communication, are likely to remain important as the Council now enters into a new round of commissioning from 2015 forward.

### 1.3. EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE IN PHASE 1

#### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

SYP have responsibilities for all young people – but their priority is to focus on the most vulnerable. The recommissioned service, particularly elements such as YSS, were indeed targeted at the most vulnerable but, of course, limiting the service to the most vulnerable is difficult both because of the high demands from other groups and the pressures

which this focus places on political decision makers. The governance structures in Surrey proved sufficiently strong to support the service in maintaining this focus throughout the transformation process. In particular, the move to more targeted provision was protected by giving each local area a budget through the Youth Small Grants programme. This allowed local elected members to become involved in deciding what were the priorities of that area as a whole, while other programmes focused on the more targeted work with priority groups of young people.

Given the major budget cuts which the service faced and the short time frame within which changes had to be made, strong leadership from the top was needed and was provided from start to end of the transformation process. This leadership was perhaps the single most important reason for the success of this phase of the transformation and its ability to surmount the many constraints which were faced, including unhelpful aspects of national policy, local political concerns, and council policies on issues such as staffing terms and conditions, calculation of service overheads, procurement procedures and varying levels of trust between the council and the local third sector. Importantly, the top management team which was able to exercise this leadership was seen to have widened over time.

Given the level of uncertainty involved, it was inevitable that many staff members were concerned about the effect of the new models on them (including, for some, the effect on their jobs). In these circumstances, it was remarkable that so many were prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to the proposed changes.

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Given the time pressures during the original recommissioning process, consultation with partners and other stakeholders was often carried out to tight deadlines, so that they did not have as much opportunity to shape the new model as was originally hoped. In the new round of commissioning, this joint shaping of the new models should be more feasible. The mini-case study of the communication strategy of Mannheim shows some ways forward on how to strengthen internal communication and dialogue with staff and partners in Phase 3.

SYP are now much more effectively targeted than previously but the impacts on inequality, which are likely to be much higher than before, are not specifically measured and reported.

While the SYP transformation process benefited from strong leadership in the Directorate, there is also a need for more distributed leadership at all levels of the hierarchy in SYP, rather than just from key figures at the top of the hierarchy. While it was inevitable that in a period of transformation, many staff would be disoriented to some extent by the uncertainty involved, there appeared to be an undue dependence on top management to 'sort things out'. This puts any change process at risk and steps need to be taken to ensure that the new commissioning process from 2014 onwards has more leadership at key points throughout the service.

#### 1.4. EVALUATION OF CO-PRODUCTION IN PHASE 1

##### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Young people were involved throughout the process of shaping the new service model and the recommissioned services. While the extent and quality of involvement varied, some co-production practices such as the co-commissioning of the LPF with young people won a CIPFA award. Furthermore, co-production with young people became a 'commissioning standard' to which all bidders had to respond.

##### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The longstanding co-production approach which had been practised in youth restorative justice in Surrey was not used as extensively as it might have been in designing the co-production approach in other parts of the new SYP.

#### 1.5. EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES IN PHASE 1

##### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Phase 1 of the Transformation Process was successful in orienting SYP towards outcomes. This highlighted the value of a comprehensive commissioning process, where outcomes could be addressed by several mechanisms within SYP, giving them more chance to be achieved. The example set by SYP is currently providing a template for review of commissioning across the whole of CSF. Moreover, the value of this approach has been highlighted by the subsequent achievement of major outcome improvements with substantial budget reductions.

Senior staff in Surrey believe that its approach to YSS is the most integrated approach in England, as it embraces NEETs, the criminal justice system, homelessness, etc. and increasingly works with children in need and on mental health issues. The key to the approach is its holistic nature, focusing on the needs of individual young people, rather than starting with labels identifying particular problems from which they may suffer. This distinctive approach was expected to contribute strongly to the achievement of the desired outcomes (as indeed has proved to be the case).

##### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The outcomes orientation which was initiated in Phase 1 was not fully implemented in the models which emerged for services – there remained a desire to see 'bodies through the door', so that volume of activity and numbers of participants were sometimes given more emphasis, and impact on quality of life outcomes was given less impact, than had originally been expected.

The logic behind the transformation process in Phase 1 highlighted the value of a comprehensive commissioning process not just for SYP but also potentially for all services which impact on the wellbeing of young people, whether they are provided by Surrey County Council, its partners or other organisations. However, it did not prove possible during Phase 1 to engage fully all of the external partners and stakeholders who are relevant to outcomes improvement for young people. This is something which the next round of commissioning will be able to remedy.

## 1.6. EVALUATION OF EFFICIENCY IN PHASE 1

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The preparation of business cases for the new services was meticulous and comprehensive, with creative approaches being sought on how overheads in the service might be treated differently and how different business models might result in different net costs to the service. This contributed to a clear picture of how the business case would stack up for different balances of the public-third sector mix.

The example of SYP has provided a high profile and very valuable example in Surrey County Council of how radical change can be managed positively, with improvements to priority outcomes, while simultaneously undertaking substantial budget cuts. It has therefore also provided the Council with a facility which can take on extra tasks which need a more challenging approach (e.g. the extra responsibilities around Children in Need which have recently been transferred).

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In order that providers have maximal stability and opportunity to innovate, longer term contracts are desirable. The three year contracts which were generally built into the first round of recommissioning were not optimal (although already better than is often available in the third sector) but for the future a move to five year contracts should be considered.

In the commissioning approach which emerged in Phase 1, there were quite separate programmes, each with a number of contracts – this gave clear focus to the programmes but it did tend to divide certain activities artificially, and also made it a little more difficult for services to work together. Although the assumption was often made that services would work together, in practice they have not always done so, often because of logistical issues. The efficiency gains which this approach offered are still potentially available – for example, some team managers in YSS have successfully brought a range of different services together (e.g. in Runnymede and Surrey Heath). It will clearly be important that the new commissioning process from 2014 onwards learns this lesson, so that the new model gives more emphasis to such links and, indeed, consideration is given to reducing the number of models.

In spite of the major efforts made in market development, there was still some concern that more high-quality providers might have been attracted, while not undermining the local voluntary sector. Moreover, market management might have given more attention to encouraging the evolution of more micro-providers, e.g. service users and carers who have something distinctive to contribute as providers.

## 2. EVALUATION OF THE RECOMMISSIONED SERVICES FROM JANUARY 2012 TO DATE (PHASE 2)



### 2.1. THE MODEL CHOSEN FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2012 AND SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

The operating models which underlie the new outcomes-based commissioning approach included:

**YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE:** A specialist casework service providing one-to-one support to the most vulnerable young people across Surrey.

**PATHWAYS:** Developing new SEND provision in Surrey, working in partnership with GFE Colleges, Health, Social Care, parents, carers and young people to improve outcomes for SEND young people.

**SURREY OUTDOOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (SOLD):** offering outdoor learning opportunities for young people across Surrey.

**CENTRE BASED YOUTH WORK (CBYW):** 32 Youth centres that provide face to face youth work with young people.

**SKILLS CENTRES:** a daytime foundation learning service based in youth centres, which targets those young people who are NEET.

**LOCAL PREVENTION FRAMEWORK (LPF):** A service co-designed by and operating in local communities to prevent young people from becoming NEET.

**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT:** A universal service providing a platform for engagement with young people as well as delivering information, advice and guidance. The contract also seeks young people's feedback on services.

**YEAR 11/12 TRANSITION:** Providing support to young people at risk of becoming NEET in Year 11 of school and supporting successful transition to college or employment with training in Year 12.

**INDIVIDUAL PREVENTION GRANTS (IPGs):** Delivered through the YSS, allowing targeted sums of money to be made available to young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET to help them overcome barriers to participation.

**LEADER'S READY FOR WORK PROGRAMME (R4W):** A mid-term adjustment to the SYP operating model to produce and/or implement an employability curriculum (embedded within all SYP services), Skills Centres, CBYW, SOLD, Youth Engagement, a communications plan, employer events to promote apprenticeships and wider youth employment opportunities, and District/Borough Progression Plans, which fit the strategies in the Young People's Employability Plan.

**FREE MEALS FOR YEAR 12:** This programme removes the barrier of cost of food for economically disadvantaged young people who choose to progress to a college or training provider post-16. Whilst young people who attend School Sixth Forms can remain eligible for Free School Meals, those who choose another progression route have previously not received support. This innovative approach has ensured greater parity of support for young people.

**YOUTH SMALL GRANTS:** Flexible, local funding to make grants of between £500 and £5,000 to support smaller, local organisations to enable: more quality youth work to be delivered locally; more young people to participate in education, employment and training; and more young people to be kept safe from crime and anti-social behaviour.

**GYPSY SKILLS:** Gypsy Skills is an alternative education provision that has been developed in partnership with GRT communities, to engage young people from these communities in education and training.

**ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME:** ALP provides learning opportunities for young people in Year 11 who have been permanently excluded or have excluded themselves from mainstream education. The programme aims to provide young people with all of the necessary life and social skills, formal education and support needed to enable them to seek employment or proceed to further education.

The *Internal Review* assessed the performance of each of these services separately (with the exception of the final four services). This report therefore takes a more holistic view, evaluating the success of the first round of recommissioning from 2012–2013 in terms of its overall achievements against the four criteria set out in the evaluation framework (see Figure 4).

**Table 2: An overview of the new service model for SYP**

Scope of SYP operating model	Youth Support Service	Learners with Difficulties and Disabilities	Local Prevention Framework	Centre Based Youth Work	SOLD	Skills Centres	Year 11–12 Transition	Youth engagement
<b>Purpose</b>	To reduce NEET and offending with some targeted prevention.	To support SEN statemented young people in the transition from school to college.	To prevent young people from becoming NEET or offending.	To prevent young people from becoming NEET or offending.	To prevent and reduce NEET.	To provide education and training to otherwise NEET young people.	To support young people who are at risk of becoming NEET in the transition from school to college or work with training.	To provide information to young people to inform decisions.
<b>Target group</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NEET young people 16–19.</li> <li>2. Young people in the youth justice system 10–17 years old.</li> <li>3. Young people not yet NEET or in the YJS aged 10–16 who attend a PRU; who are a looked after child living in Surrey; or have to come to the attention of the police on two or more occasions, but have not received a judicial sentence.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Young people in Year 9 to 11 with a statement for SEN</li> <li>2. LLDD young people 16–25 years</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1500 young people at risk of becoming NEET or offending aged 13 to 16 years.</li> <li>2. The peers and siblings (aged 10–16) of the target group above.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 10–19 year old young people who attend the youth club.</li> <li>2. 10–16 year old young people at risk of becoming NEET or offending whom live within a two-mile radius of the youth centre.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 16–19 year old NEET young people.</li> <li>2. 13–16 year old young people at risk of becoming NEET.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 10–16 year old NEET young people (once enrolled onto the course no longer be NEET).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 500 young people in Year 11 at risk of becoming NEET who do not have an intended destination by the end of the first term of year 11.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 100,000 13–16 year old young people living in Surrey.</li> </ol>
<b>Start of intervention</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At point of becoming NEET.</li> <li>2. At point of arrest.</li> <li>3. By referral only</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Year 9.</li> <li>2. Year 12.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At point of contact by provider.</li> <li>2. N/A.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On attendance at youth club.</li> <li>2. At point of contact with provider.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By referral only from YSS.</li> <li>2. At point of contact locally.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At point of enrolment onto course.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Second term of Year 11.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At point of contact.</li> </ol>
<b>End of intervention</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When young person becomes PETE or at the end of the academic year which they are 19 years old.</li> <li>2. 3 months after the end of order.</li> <li>3. 16th Birthday.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. End of Year 11.</li> <li>2. 19 to 25 depending needs and progress of learner.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. End of programme.</li> <li>2. N/A.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Up to 25 years of age.</li> <li>2. As above.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At end of programme.</li> <li>2. At end of programme.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At point of transfer to mainstream college, training course or job. Or, 3 months after completing the course (whichever is first).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first day of the second term of Year 12. Or, after the first 3 months of employment.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not specified.</li> </ol>

Figure 6. Support into PETE in Surrey

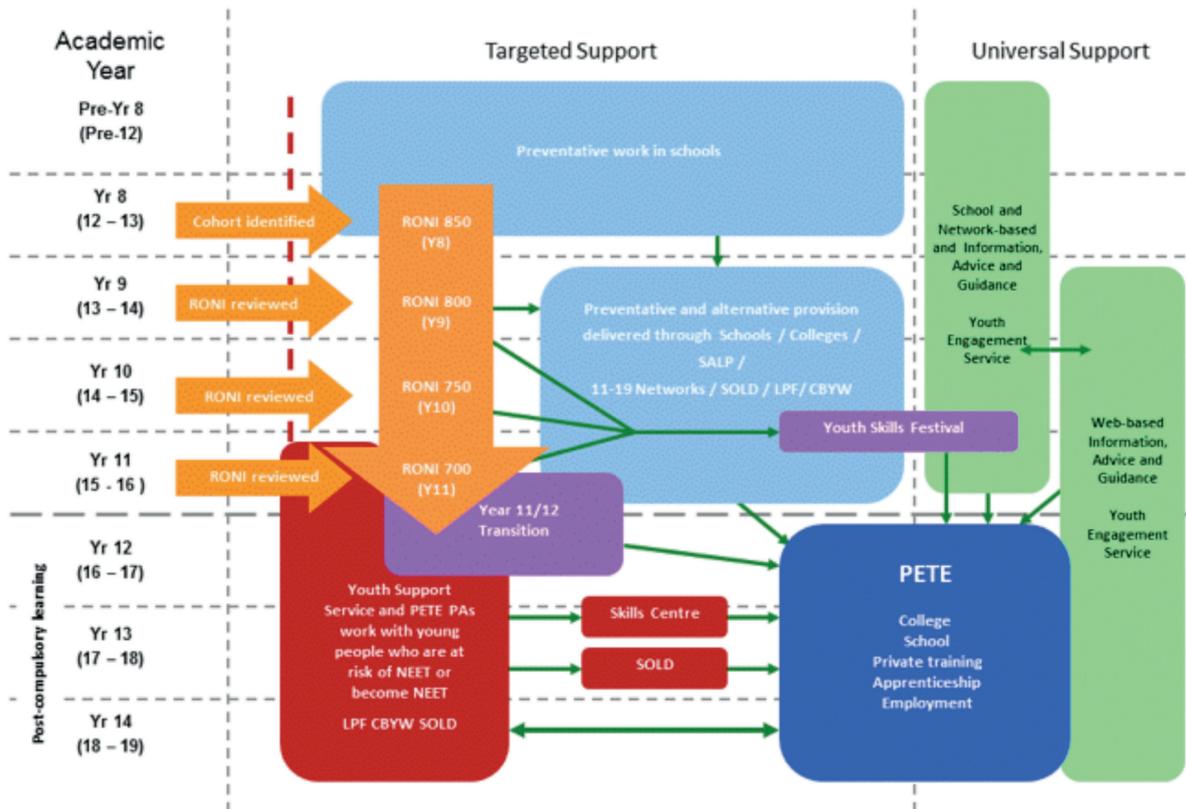


Table 2 from the Internal Review 2013 provides another overview of the key elements of the model chosen for implementation in 2012, with subsequent modifications. Figure 6 shows how these services fit together to provide an integrated set of support services to help young people in Surrey into PETE.

## 2.2. EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE IN PHASE 2

The governance arrangements for SYP changed with the recommissioning of services in 2012. Where services were externalised, the new governance arrangements were generally based on a move towards partnership working between Surrey County Council and the new service providers.

### A. STRATEGY AND VISION OF PARTNERSHIPS

In most services, there has been a strong alignment of partners around an agreed strategy, which was seen to be clear and ambitious. The new model stressed from the outset that there would be an expectation of cultural transformation. While at first these new partnerships were seen as highly demanding, over time there has been increasing agreement from partners that their aims have indeed been realistic. Moreover, most partners feel that the roles, capabilities and contributions of different partners have gradually become clearer over time. This is well illustrated by the case study of Ready 4 Work carpentry project in Woking (see Mini Case Study below).

#### MINI-CASE STUDY: Ready 4 Work carpentry project in Woking to support young people (YSS) in Surrey

Surrey Youth Support Service (YSS) has had a transformational impact on the number of young people identified as NEET since 2012. This has been achieved through a 1-1 case assessment model, undertaken by skilled professionals, which supports individuals towards participating in appropriate intervention based on their aspirations and needs.

Within the Woking YSS team, a number of assessments identified a number of NEET young people who were reluctant to engage in more traditional learning options, but were keen to learn a 'trade' combined with entrepreneurial skills to support aspirations towards future self-employment. In order to address this apparent 'gap' in local provision the YSS sought to develop an innovative partnership.

The carpentry enterprise scheme with YSS involves Woking Borough Council who provide the workshop/ industrial unit, the Diocese of Guildford which has enabled the scheme to seek charitable support and Young Enterprise, which is the UK's leading business and enterprise education charity. The recruitment of young people to the scheme was undertaken by the Woking YSS Team. Four young people started in September 2013 under the tutorage of a qualified carpenter and project leads from the YSS and Young Enterprise.

Whilst learning carpentry skills, the young people engaged in bespoke sessions with the Young Enterprise worker, aimed at supporting them to set up and run their own real company over the course of an academic year, with the support and guidance of a volunteer adviser from business. In December 2013, The Goodwood Company (name produced by the young people) began trading and at its first trade fair took over £400 from selling wooden products the young people had designed and produced.

The young people within the business have assigned themselves company roles, which match their skill set e.g. production, marketing, selling, finance. Through participating under the guidance of the YSS and Young Enterprise they quickly and significantly developed their enterprise knowledge, skills and attributes in a business context. As the company has progressed they have learnt by doing, coping with a changing and evolving business and developing essential skills such as teamwork, presentation, problem solving, creativity, innovation and leadership.

Since December 2013 the Goodwood Company has secured substantial orders for its products with a range of local small and large businesses. In addition, the company entered and recently won the Young Enterprise Surrey Final 2014 for best business, beating off competition from approximately 20 other Young Enterprise companies in total and was the only one operated by young people who had previously been NEET. Looking ahead, the future of the business appears strong and the experience demonstrates that innovative, enterprising, co-produced partnership approaches can contribute towards some fantastic outcomes for young people who have not previously thrived in more traditional learning environments.

Local governance arrangements have been put in place for the Local Prevention Framework, through Local Committees, and Youth Steering Groups for youth centres, which often involve elected members. These have helped to bring local partners and stakeholders on board with the strategy and vision behind the new approaches.

On the health side, while links are being developed with Public Health, which has now transferred from the NHS to Surrey CC, there is still much more to be done in developing the role that health might play in helping young people from NEET to PETE. There is also scope for better alignment between SYP and Public Health in the County Council around more general decisions affecting young people. On the education front, relationships with schools appear to have been set back somewhat, after the move from a clear 'offer' through the Connexions service to the more complex offer (based on a trading approach) under the new model. However, after some initial confusion, SYP have developed a new approach of partnering with schools through the RONI process to identify young people who are at risk of becoming NEET and this is working well. Nevertheless, schools are not still as closely engaged with the current providers of SYP as they might be. Indeed, it has been suggested that this may partly explain why schools have not played a full role in the Surrey troubled families work, even though improved results here would clearly help all the public agencies in-

volved. Furthermore, some interviewees suggested that some of the support for young people stops too quickly when certain thresholds are reached, e.g. when they reach 18, which makes it difficult for schools to work successfully with the relevant services.

#### B. PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

There was a general agreement by providers that there is mutual trust and a good working relationship. They also generally agreed that over time they had been able to achieve an appropriate level of participation in the partnership decision making processes, although some partners thought this had taken longer than was necessary, due to the Council being over-confident of its own chosen ways forward.

The feeling of 'ownership' and responsibility of partners varies between the services – for example, there are particularly good partnership relationships with the police (although even here some problems were mentioned arising from the fact that funding cycles tend to be different between police, health and local government). In some cases, however, the relationship is more that of a contract than a genuinely shared partnership. However, we did not find a case where there appeared to a problem of lack of commitment by any of the partners to the joint strategy.

#### C. 'PARTNERSHIPS' OR CONTRACTS ?

The main process for fostering collaboration has been monitoring of achievements through the performance management system. While this performance management system has enabled great clarity of purpose and focus on strategic goals, it has been seen by some providers as imposing the threat, at times, of a mechanistic and 'micro-management' culture. Indeed, the performance management system is very detailed and often appears more consistent with a traditional specification-based contract relationship than with a real partnership. Nevertheless, most of the fears have slowly receded as it has become clear that performance information has been used as a 'tin-opener' to open up and clarify problems, rather than as a pruning knife to cut out low performing providers or as a way of attributing blame and seeking to punish those responsible for targets not being met. Indeed, there was general agreement amongst our interviewees that there was a strong commitment to learning through engaging with partners. The detailed performance management system has also promoted clarity of attribution of benefits and costs in relation to each of the externalised services and in light of the likely risks.

Interviewees also pointed to the Quality Mark system as a valuable process for ensuring quality and guiding the dialogue between commissioners and providers – it has enabled clarity of expectations, while justifying arms-length relationships, where quality was clearly being achieved. Indeed, a number of interviewees from the third sector suggested the potential value of more emphasis on Quality Mark type schemes in the future, and less on service specifications and performance management systems.

In this way, SYP has been able to gain the best of both worlds – relationships have benefited from trust and an open discussion of issues and problems, while focusing clearly on relevant performance information and quickly adjusting services accordingly. Some concern was, however, expressed by interviewees that low cost may increasingly be given excessive weight in the allocation of contracts to providers and that this might undermine the successful achievement of outcomes which has so far characterised the new services.

### 2.3. EVALUATION OF CO-PRODUCTION IN PHASE 2

#### A. STRONG COMMITMENT TO CO-PRODUCTION

The interviews with a wide range of stakeholders involved in Services for Young People (SYP) have shown us that there is significant commitment to and some real enthusiasm for the concept of co-production across Surrey County Council, third sector providers and local partners. At the same time, it has become obvious that there is not yet a fully shared understanding of what co-production means for SYP and how it can be translated into everyday working relationships between public services and young people, their families and social networks.

At the start of our discussions with key stakeholders, interviewees responded to a number of key questions around ‘Your views on co-production’, set out on the *Governance International* poster. The responses given by the twelve interviewees concerned are summarised in Table 1. (Note: some interviewees were interviewed in other locations and many were interviewed by telephone, so were not included in this exercise)

**Table 3: Views on co-production of public services with young people**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Involving citizens in the commissioning of public services will help to identify priority services.	4	7	1	
Harnessing the ideas and insights of citizens and front-line staff in service design will trigger innovations.	9	3		
Giving citizens a bigger role in the delivery of public services will make big efficiency savings.		9	3	
Involving citizens in the evaluation of public service will bring big improvements in quality.	5	5	2	
Front-line staff are keen to enable citizens to contribute actively to public services.	5	4	3	
Most citizens do not want to get engaged – only the usual suspects.	1	6	4	1
Citizens trust politicians to do what is good for their wellbeing.		1	6	5
Public sector managers already understand how to support citizens to solve problems for themselves.		3	9	

It is striking that most respondents here were optimistic that public service co-production would bring efficiency savings. It is also interesting to note that there was a strong agreement that front-line staff would be ‘up’ for co-production.

There was less agreement, however, on whether most citizens want to get engaged. While some interviewees thought that this was the case, more disagreed. Finally, a large majority of interviewees disagreed with the statement that “Public sector managers already understand how their agency can help the public solve problems for themselves”, sug-

gesting that there is still a long way to go before all public services which are relevant to young people in Surrey are really geared up to making the most of the potential of co-production.

This was, of course, just a quick poll of a sample of our interviewees. It would be interesting to address these questions systematically through an online survey to a wider range of stakeholders in Surrey County Council, its local partners and its third sector providers. This would allow us to compare attitudes to and assessments of co-production more fully between the key players involved. Indeed, we learnt from one interviewee that a survey with third sector providers had been undertaken at the beginning of the transformation journey, which provided a baseline in relation to their understanding of outcomes and approaches to co-production. However, this has not yet been followed up to assess subsequent changes in perceptions, attitudes and experiences of co-production – something which might now be considered to help in shaping the next round of commissioning.

In our interviews, there was a widely held view that “young people would not accept anything imposed on them” and that therefore most youth workers and community development staff practice a collaborative rather than a paternalistic way of working with young people. As one interviewee expressed it, an approach underpinned by diversion and informality “might be said to be in the DNA of more mature youth justice practitioners but has either lain dormant or been misappropriated in the new youth justice service” (Byrne and Brooks, 2014, Section Two). While most interviewees thought that co-production of public services and solutions with young people is a better way of working, one interviewee was concerned that the professionalism of youth support staff is key to a high quality service and that quality standards might fall if tasks and responsibilities were to be shared with volunteers or young people themselves.

In the absence of the kind of staff survey we suggest above, it is hard to diagnose the ‘cultures’ of staff of Surrey County Council and local partners but these different pieces of evidence suggest that there are staff cultures supporting the concept of co-production but that there are also pockets in these organisations believing that ‘experts know what’s best for young people’.

## B. BOLD EXPERIMENTATION WITH CO-COMMISSIONING

Surrey County Council needs to be congratulated for having the courage to involve young people in the commissioning process of a rather complex service such as the LPF. While there is a lot of interest in UK local government in co-commissioning with people using services, most local councils have been reluctant to put this into practice, apart from a few exceptions such as Midlothian Council in Scotland where a range of imaginative approaches have been taken, such as Adult Social Care involving people with learning disabilities in the commissioning of new accommodation.

In Surrey County Council there were different views as to what extent people have been involved in the commissioning process and how successful the co-commissioning process has been. One interviewee stated in relation to design of the Local Prevention Framework that “young people have been involved throughout the process and have helped to develop ideas for commissioning” and suggested that the young people who were represented in the Youth Task Groups were very frank and open and that elected members respected the views of young people in the commissioning process. This interviewee illustrated how the involvement of young people could exercise a reality check on the process, citing a young person involved in tender selection who confronted a bidder claiming to be strongly linked to local communities by asking: “You are doing a lot of work in my school? I have never seen you, nor your organisation, in my school!”

Nevertheless, some interviewees were concerned that the understanding by most adults of the role of young people is still limited. One commented: “Adults need to stop taking a lead”. Another remarked that in some Youth Centres many young people do not really feel they have a say in how that Youth Centre runs. Several interviewees suggested that, while there was a lot of consultation of young people during the commissioning process, decision-making still remained essentially top-down.

Several interviewees suggested that the involvement of young people in the commissioning of services within the Local Prevention Framework provides good practice to build on.

### MINI-CASE STUDY: The involvement of young people in the commissioning of the Local Prevention Framework (LPF) in Surrey

The LPF was part of the transformation of procurement in young people's services that won an award for the Best Public Procurement Project category in the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) Awards in September 2012. The award recognised the complexity of the procurement project and the first outcomes based framework to be adopted in this area.

In particular, the involvement of young people in the commissioning process and the devolution of the budget to Local Committees at borough-level were highly innovative. In a first step, officers of Surrey County Council developed a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) in consultation with other stakeholders. This framework allowed local officers to establish 26 pre-approved suppliers whose business solvency and services had been carefully assessed on the basis of the PQQ. The framework also simplified and speeded up the bidding process as providers only had to supply key elements of information once during the PQQ stage, irrespective of how many contracts they bid for over the three to five year lifetime of the framework.

In the next stage of the process pre-approved suppliers were invited to bid against each other for specific contracts to provide services in the 11 Districts and Boroughs. The bidders were asked to complete a 'Request for Bid' (RfB) document detailing what services they could offer, how much funding they would require, the proposed method of delivery and how many young people they aimed to support. These bids were assessed by officers against criteria based on the required outcomes. Following an assessment of the bids by officers, shortlisted providers were asked to pitch their proposal to the Youth Task Group. The role of these groups was to assist and advise Local Committees in relation to youth issues and the future delivery of youth provision locally. Each Task Group typically contained four appointees from the Local Committee, two from County level and two from a Borough/District level. In addition the Task Group could include up to two representatives of relevant stakeholders and up to four young people from the District/Borough. The 11 Youth Task Groups (YTG) comprised County Councillors, District and Borough officers, young people and other stakeholders, who worked together to prioritise the needs of their local area and support the provider selection process. Officers then made a final supplier recommendation to the Local Committee based on the score. However, in some cases no suitable provider was found and in one case the Local Committee rejected the recommendation. In this instance the option was to either secure an in-house provider or re-start the commissioning process with framework providers.

*Sources: Education Select Committee (2012), Review of the Local Prevention Framework (Draft), 29 November 2012 and Review of the Local Prevention Framework (Appendix 1)*

Even though the co-commissioning of the LPF can be considered as a good practice case there is obviously scope for improvement. In particular, there is scope for giving young people a more effective role in the commissioning process. An evaluation of this commissioning process carried out in 2012 reports that "from the outset of the process, it appears as though many YTGs were unsure about why particular providers had been shortlisted. While Task Group members were confident in the evaluation process they also reported that they would have liked to know more about the detail of who was rejected and on what basis, as this could have offered them further information on which to base their recommendation." A draft briefing note of the evaluation prepared for the Education Select Committee reports: "YTG members wondered why some providers had been selected when their offer was not aligned with the expectation that bids would be innovative and locally focused". Furthermore, it is stated that "Stakeholders wondered if the method which was used to involve young people in the LPF's decision making processes was accurately representing their views. Finding young people who were willing to take part in the process, was typically perceived to be a difficult task and involving them in the task group decision was perceived to be even harder. Many of those present at the task group said that young people frequently looked bored, confused or uncomfortable or were not genuine members of the target audience."

However, this in-house evaluation was not able to examine in detail the views of young people as to whether they felt they had an influence in the commissioning process and what needs to be changed in the next round from their point of view.

By building on this co-commissioning experience with the Local Prevention Framework it may be worthwhile exploring whether young people (after receiving proper training and briefing) might have a formal role in job interviews, in particular with front-line staff who are in direct contact with young people. By being on an interview panel, young people can make sure that job candidates have the right social skills and competencies to build successful relationships with young people. Furthermore, young people become aware of what it takes to conduct a successful interview which is useful knowledge when they have to apply for training schemes and jobs.

### C. HARNESSING THE IDEAS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Many interviewees suggested that co-design of SYP is relatively widely practiced. In Youth Centres, in particular, many services are shaped with and by young people although, as one interviewee pointed out, this does depend on the youth worker.

Moreover, Surrey CC has created a number of information and communication platforms which have been developed with young people such as the youth website *WeareSurge*.

#### MINI-CASE STUDY: Co-designing the youth website *Wearesurge* with young people in Surrey

The youth website [www.wearesurge.co.uk](http://www.wearesurge.co.uk) is a website for young people, designed by young people and provides an example of systematic co-design with young people in Surrey County Council. *Surge* has been designed to allow young people to express the things that matter to them (#troubles), provide information (#truths) and provide advice and guidance (#advice) to each other. The youth engagement platform has engaged 60,000 young people since the launch of *Wearesurge* in 2012. According to one interviewee 80% of the contents of the website is produced by young people. A project manager of a commercial company is responsible for supporting the young writers contributing to the website. The website receives about 10,000 visits from young people in Surrey per month and also links to a Facebook page with 60–70,000 members.

Source: *Surrey County Council*

In spite of these impressive web statistics a number of interviewees suggested that the website has not been an overall success. As one person suggested “the outcomes are there but they lie underneath a layer of content, which we are now bringing to the surface – it was built with too many layers on top of outcomes”. The website has been redesigned in April 2014 and the new version is currently being tested.

Another co-designed internet platform is U-Explore which provides a free online careers advice resource for all students aged 13–19 in Surrey. Using inventive technology, U-Explore helps young people explore their future careers and the steps they need to take to reach their goals. With 2000 jobs profiled plus a range of videos, 360 degree virtual tours of working environments, business profiles and more, young people can explore what types of jobs are right for them.

Given that language is often considered as a barrier for citizens who engage and work with public services, it is highly beneficial to co-design information outlets – whether online or offline – with the target group concerned. This applies in particular to young people whose language tends to be distinctively different. The co-design of websites with young people has long been considered as good practice in Europe – other inspiring examples are the youth website *Stradanove* in Modena, Italy ([www.stradanove.net/](http://www.stradanove.net/)) or the website *MyEmsdetten.de* (now closed) of the German Council Ems-

detten. However, increasingly young people move on to use other forms of communication – in particular, they communicate through Facebook and other virtual communities. There are also several EU programmes which encourage local authorities to experiment with such new forms of communication.

Another more recent co-design initiative is Shift Surrey which was an initiative for young people delivered from within Policy and Performance in the Chief Executive's Office, but complementary to SYP. It provides a space for regular meetings and an online platform to discuss ideas on how to make our communities better and improve public services, and help each other make the ideas happen. This forum is open to all residents, including young people, and works with young people as Shift Apprentices. Recent events have focussed on young people's issues such as the recent Lunchtime Session on 'Paths to Employment'. However, it is unclear from the website how decisions are made on which ideas get funded and whether residents have any role in the prioritisation of proposals. For young people to stay engaged it is vital that co-design does not stop at the stage of discussing new ideas. As the *Governance International Co-Design Toolkit* points out, co-design is a multi-stage process involving participants in the five stages of 'experience, explore, experiment, evaluate, evolve'.

Figure 7: A pathway from ideas to implementation



#### D. AN UNUSED POTENTIAL: PEER SUPPORT FOR AND BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN SURREY CC

While a number of interviewees suggested that some young people had taken on a leadership role in their network and provided advice to other young people on an ad-hoc basis, there has not been a lot of emphasis on the development of peer support. In fact, it appears that there are currently no formal peer trainer/education schemes. However, one interviewee remarked “there was a peer education programme about ten years ago which worked very well. I’d love to develop such a programme with young people provided there is some long-term investment”. Furthermore, one of the providers of Year 11/12 Transitions work suggested that more peer mentoring might be built into this programme in future. Again, more emphasis might have been placed on encouraging the evolution of ‘micro-providers’, e.g. young service users who might become distinctive providers to their peer group, allowing their assets to be harnessed for the benefit of other young people, in the co-production spirit.

The good practice case of the peer educators programme of the London Borough of Lambeth shows the potential of peer support for and by young people on sensitive issues such as sexual health where direct professional interventions and advice tends to be distrusted. The case also shows how peer support may improve outcomes such as employability which are still key for Surrey CC.

##### **MINI-CASE STUDY: Peer educators lead the way: How London Borough of Lambeth lowered teenage pregnancy rates and improved sex education**

In 2002 the London Borough of Lambeth – population 270,000 – had one of the highest levels of teenage pregnancy in Britain. A group of young people who were members of Lambeth’s Youth Council decided that they wanted to do something practical to address teenage pregnancy and improve sex education in schools. They were sure that they could be much more effective in getting messages across to their peers than an adult.

Over 250 young people aged 14 to 19 were trained as peer educators from 2002–2011 and led hundreds of workshops in local schools and colleges. The workshops were very well received by students and staff. Rates of teenage pregnancy fell steadily throughout this period (although this was not due solely to the peer educator initiative), and the peer educators developed valuable skills and confidence.

*Source: <http://www.govint.org/good-practice/case-studies/london-borough-of-lambeth/>  
Contact person: [alegal\\_miller@hotmail.com](mailto:alegal_miller@hotmail.com)*

The ‘Role Model’ practiced by young people of the Shepperton Youth Centre can be seen as a first step towards a similar peer trainer/education scheme. In particular, the Centre has supported young people through co-production to lead and own sessions at the Centre and the Centre has achieved the Quality Mark (Level 2). However, there is scope for improving the co-delivery of Youth Centre sessions with young people. Moreover, there is a need to explore the scope of co-delivery of services with young people outside the Youth Centres.

Peer support models also have a lot of potential in youth justice. As Byrne and Brooks argue (2014) in a conference paper on youth justice approaches, the ‘opportunity model’ suggests that capacity-building of young people and assets-based approaches are likely to be successful where young people who have offended are given the opportunity to develop their skills and identity by participating in activities alongside non-offending peers. The Austrian case study on restorative youth justice provides a model for training youth offenders who caused a car accident under the influence of alcohol or drugs while driving. The Austrian case study may give Surrey CC some ideas how to put an assets-based approach in criminal justice into practice.

#### MINI-CASE STUDY: Peer Training of Learner Drivers by Offenders in Austria

Young drivers tend to engage in risky behaviour and don't fully understand the risks of driving, which often leads to serious accidents. In every European country, this group is particularly vulnerable to accidents. "Yes, accidents happen – but not to me" is a widespread belief among young learner drivers. Even when they have had sound training in their driving schools and been subjected to major publicity campaigns aimed at preventing accidents, many young people remain insufficiently aware of the risks they run as car drivers – and particularly as learner drivers.

The co-production approach of this Austrian model of restorative youth justice is very simple and effective: Young offenders between 17–28 years old add to the theoretical training given in driving schools by telling their peers in a very direct and authentic way how they caused an accident (in most cases under the influence of alcohol) and by using their own cases to point out the implications of risky driving. The fact that the offenders are of the same age and meet with their peers face-to-face during the driving tuition creates an emotional closeness between the offender and the driving school pupils. The principle of peer education means that young learners are directly confronted with the experiences of young offenders. This approach breaks down the normal distance between trainer and trainee – it holds up a mirror to the young drivers, in which they can see reflected their own behaviour, and its likely consequences.

An evaluation shows that this model has a significant impact on the behaviour of learner drivers. More than 93% of interviewed learner drivers said that the peer trainers had won their attention. More than 86% thought that the peer training had made them aware of the risks of road traffic. 89% suggested that they will drive more carefully in the future as a result of *Close To*. On the other hand, learner drivers in the control group, who had not participated in *the peer training*, tended to exhibit much more risky behaviours.

Source: <http://www.govint.org/good-practice/case-studies/close-to-peer-training-of-learner-drivers-by-offenders-in-austria/>

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## E. DEVELOPING CREATIVE FORMS OF CO-ASSESSMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Most interviewees suggested that co-assessment with young people needs to be developed further. At present, young people are invited to provide feedback through surveys and assessment forms but as one interviewee remarked critically “not many young people like to fill these out”. Co-assessment approaches such as “Kids exploring their neighbourhood as detectives” in the Berlin Borough Mahrzahn-Hellersdorf show how more creative forms of co-assessment can be designed and how local councillors and officers can engage in a dialogue with young people to discuss new solutions to problems identified by young people.

### MINI-CASE STUDY: Kids exploring their neighbourhoods as detectives in Berlin

“Do you want to become a detective? If yes, work with us to explore what you like about your neighbourhood”. This is how children aged 8–14 years market their activities to peers. About 200 children have been working with public officers and local councillors for more than seven years to assess how ‘child-friendly’ their local neighbourhood is. The kids take pictures of what they like but also what they don’t like. Positive photos go into the ‘Treasure Box’, negatives ones into the ‘bin’. Both collections of photos are prioritised by importance and handed over to the CEO and responsible heads of service in a Children’s Assembly. The public officers engage in a dialogue with the children and tell them what they are going to change. For example, the Children’s Assembly on 1 July 2010 discussed:

- Criticisms by the children of overfull bins and the amount of litter around bins in parks, making parks unattractive and reducing children’s readiness to use the bins. There was a proposal to design more creative bins – for example, in the shape of a Zebra or a frog with an open mouth, so that the children can stick the litter into the animal’s mouth. The children thought that this would make the bins more attractive and would influence their behaviour positively. The public sector officials very much liked the idea and promised to pilot it in co-operation with a local school.
- Why the ‘Detectives’ were not allowed to use playgrounds and sports facilities of schools in the afternoon or during week-ends, even though some of them had recently been renovated. This issue was passed to the local Council, which suggested a survey among schools to see if they were ready to change the opening hours of their school sports and play areas. However, 25 out of the 27 local schools in the borough refused to change current practice, on the grounds of perceived risks of vandalism and improper use. However, a pilot project was launched at two schools, which were happy to provide activities for children during afternoon and week-ends (Note: Most schools in Germany finish lessons at lunch-time).

Follow-up meetings with members of the Children’s Assembly ensure continuity and sustainability of the projects and build up trust with the involved children.

Source: [www.kijubue.de/kiezetektive](http://www.kijubue.de/kiezetektive)

Contact person: Ina Herbell, [kjb@hvd-berlin.de](mailto:kjb@hvd-berlin.de)

It seems likely that this co-assessment approach could be transferable to Surrey County Council, with young people co-assessing what makes Surrey County Council a good place to live for young people and identifying what needs to be improved.

Many interviewees also suggested making more use of the potential of social media, since these are widely used by young people. However, this is currently not easy – as one staff member said: “We’re not even allowed to use Twitter at work”. The organisation of social media surgeries in different boroughs in Surrey County Council might be a first step for raising awareness of the usefulness of social media in the local Council (and its partners) for connecting to services to young people and connecting young people to local communities.

### MINI-CASE STUDY: Social media surgeries for connecting people and creative ideas

Social media surgeries bring local people together to learn and to teach each other about how to use the web. They typically want to learn how to communicate, to campaign or to collaborate more effectively. The ethos behind the surgeries is that all you need is a place, and people who want to talk to each other, some of whom know how to use social media effectively – when these are in place, the interaction between the participants will ensure that learning takes place. A social media surgery’s only physical requirements are a room with wi-fi and facilities for refreshments, so that it provides a comfortable ambience. Surgeries are deliberately designed as informal learning environments, rather than formal structured training events. This means that the learning process is inclusive, fun and unthreatening. ‘Surgeons’ at the meetings are simply those people with sufficient knowledge of social media tools to give someone else advice. Some surgeons will have years of experience with ICT – whilst others may only have a few months but already want to share their experiences with other active citizens or community groups. As part of the inclusive learning philosophy, there are no barriers or eligibility criteria – anyone can turn up, sign in and get involved.

Despite the importance of informality, a surgery nevertheless benefits from a surgery manager who can act as a facilitator to greet ‘patients’, keep track of the learning in the room, check that people who have been ‘paired off’ are continuing to work effectively together, and that people are enjoying the event. Moreover, expectations need to be managed to prevent participants from becoming disappointed or demoralised because they have arrived hoping for more than can realistically be achieved in one session.

To make the whole process of running a social media surgery easier, the social media company Podnosh in Birmingham has created a website which gives people a systematic guide on how to design and run local surgeries (<http://www.socialmediasurgery.com/>). This website currently supports surgeries in 63 different places – although they are mostly in the UK, they have now also developed international roots, with social media surgeries having been run in Barcelona, Cape Town, Den Haag, Fredericksburg (Pennsylvania), and Drimnagh (Dublin) and Hamburg.

*Source: [www.govint.org/good-practice/case-studies/social-media-surgeries-building-community-capacity/](http://www.govint.org/good-practice/case-studies/social-media-surgeries-building-community-capacity/)  
Contact person: [hello@podnosh.com](mailto:hello@podnosh.com)*

The Communications Department of Surrey County Council might also benefit from a personnel exchange with the Corporate Communications Department of West Midlands Police, which is highly innovative in its use of social media to engage with local communities and is able to provide hands-on advice on risk management issues.

Finally, there has also been a misconception that co-production needs to be representative. This has made the recruitment of young people for co-production activities unnecessarily difficult. As a report on the review of the first year of the LPF to the Education Select Committee points out: “Finding young people who were willing to take part in the process was typically perceived to be a difficult task and involving them in the task group decision was perceived to be even harder. Many of those present at the task group said that young people frequently looked bored, confused or uncomfortable or were not genuine members of the target audience” (Paragraph 13.1). Yet the County Council already has representatives, by definition – its councillors. What is required in co-production is a group of people (both from the side of young people and on the side of staff) who have something valuable to contribute to each other’s activities. Achieving as wide a range of inputs as possible, from a diverse set of young people, is clearly desirable. However, it should not be a prerequisite, because otherwise some exciting and valuable activities might remain untried or only get off the ground very slowly, because of a lack of representativeness amongst the participants. This is especially the case where a key part of the service strategy is to target vulnerable young people. Of course, where there are clear gaps in representation, it is important that attempts be made to fill them – and that councillors should be aware of these gaps, so that they can take them into account when agreeing priorities for future activities.

#### 2.4. EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES IN PHASE 2

The central outcome sought in the transformation process of SYP can be summarised in the phrase ‘from NEET to PETE’. Consequently, a high proportion of the performance indicators monitored in SYP relate directly to demonstrating whether this was being achieved and, if not, why not.

Given the strong emphasis on the objective of reducing NEETs, evaluation of the performance of the recommissioned services hinges particularly on how well this was achieved. The data here are clear – outstanding results have been achieved in relation to the priority outcomes sought in the recommissioned services. The key outcome achievements identified by the Internal Review 2013 are summarised in Table 4. Combining these findings together with more recent data, the major improvements in outcomes include:

- a reduction of 60% in the number of young people who are NEET in Surrey (although some of this reduction came through a change in the way of counting NEETS), so that it is now the lowest in England;
- a 90% successful progression to education, training or employment from young people at risk of becoming NEET who received support from the Year 11/12 Transition commission.
- a 90% reduction in first time entrants of young people to the criminal justice system (the lowest rate of first time entrants in England and the 7th lowest use of custody out of all local authorities in England and Wales).
- a 4% increase in young people aged 16–18 starting apprenticeships since 2011 (in contrast to a decrease of 14% in England during the same period) and the fastest growing rate of apprenticeship opportunities in England;
- 290 young people who presented as homeless have been placed in safe accommodation since November 2012 and youth homelessness in Surrey is now at a record low.

Moreover, these outcome improvements have been focused on the priority groups of young people identified by the council. For example, a high proportion of young people engaged in youth centre activities are in higher need groups – in 2012–13, 37% had SEND, 20% were NEET or re-engaging, 17% were identified at risk of NEET, 16% were Children in Need, and 200 were young people who had offended.

Some of these outcome improvements can be given a monetary value. The 124 fewer NEET young people in 2012–13 compared to 2011–12 has been estimated to have resulted in a £7m saving to the public purse (using estimates based upon York University, 2010). Moreover, the reduction in out-county placements in Independent Specialist Colleges from 126 to 90 in 3 years has not only improved education outcomes but also avoided a £2m annualised cost to Surrey County Council.

These radical improvements were achieved whilst reducing expenditure by £4.5m or 25% between 2009 and 2013, demonstrating a major improvement in cost-effectiveness of the service. However, the findings from the evaluation also highlight a number of key areas for development, which could lead to further improvements in outcomes for young people through the next round of commissioning for April 2015.

Working with individual young people was a key driver of outcome improvement in many of the new models. Indeed, by 2013 there was actually an increase in the number of professionals working directly with vulnerable young people, compared to 2009. The value of this was stressed by one interviewee: “One key success factor has been our 1:1 mentoring model. For example, most of the young people we support do not like to attend maths and English lessons but, when our staff market these lessons to them, e.g. as coming in useful for getting their motor cycle qualifications, young people see that they have a point. However, our staff need to talk to the young people concerned on a 1:1 basis every day, so that on Tuesday they are made aware of their training schedule on Wednesday, etc. Without this kind of personal encouragement, the level of attendance in maths and English lessons would not be so high.” This approach originally emanated from a combination of strong professional pressure, backed by strong leadership from the top in SYP. Moreover, it benefited from being fully embedded in the new models, as individual attention to young people was at the core of many of the logframes which showed how services could help young people move from NEET to PETE. Of course, this approach was not always easy to protect in the actual process of launching the new SYP models and some interviewees felt that the fragmentation of programmes had, at times, partly weakened the intended emphasis on holistic interventions. Moreover, one interviewee com-

mented on the links between the holistic needs of the individual and the wider context: “YSS could link better into behaviours within families and other contexts – seeing young people both as victims and as perpetrators”. This systematic approach to supporting the holistic needs of vulnerable young people was reinforced by the development of the RONI approach (where Surrey has been one of the leading authorities in the country), which has been an important step in shifting the focus from problem solving to prevention. Although it took some time to bed down, and initially caused significant friction between SYP in the County Council, external service providers and schools, this has become a valuable part of the overall approach to reducing NEETs. The mini-case study below shows how the RONI approach works in practice.

#### MINI-CASE STUDY: Targeted support for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (RONI) through the Year 11/12 Transition Commission in Surrey

Surrey’s ‘One in Ten’ needs assessment, undertaken as part of the Services for Young People Transformation project in 2010, identified that the period of transition from compulsory schooling in year 11 to year 12 was a key time in the educational journeys of young people. Those who made a successful transition to a positive destination and sustained their engagement until Christmas were much more likely to remain engaged in education, training and employment into adulthood. To meet this need Surrey established the outcomes-based Year 11/12 Transition Commission, to deliver the outcome of ensuring young people who are identified as at risk of becoming NEET are participating in education, training or employment in the January following their transition.

Central to this model is the effective identification of the young people who are most at risk of becoming NEET. To do this Surrey employs a two-stage approach in partnership with secondary schools across the county. The first stage involves a predictive analysis of available data to identify young people who are most at risk, based on historical evidence of the characteristics that are most over-represented amongst young people who become NEET. These factors include issues like being a looked after child, involvement with youth justice, low school attendance and prior attainment, special educational needs and disabilities, and exclusion from school. The data that’s generated then provides a starting point for local discussion in schools, to draw on their knowledge of the circumstances and experiences of young people. These two stages taken together ensure that the young people who will benefit most from the additional support are engaged with the commission.

Whilst the commission is built around outcomes, the different providers, both internal and external, employ a similar model of delivery. Young people are allocated a key worker from the January of year 11 who provides mentoring and advice to help the young person identify a suitable progression route following their compulsory schooling. They then provide support during the summer and through the first term of year 12, which are key periods when young people are at risk of disengaging, as a result of the summer break, struggling to keep up with the work post-transition or deciding that they have chosen the wrong pathway. This support takes a variety of forms and adopts a holistic approach to addressing the multiple barriers to participation for the young people, including homelessness, substance misuse, mental health issues and family breakdown.

This commission has proved very effective since its establishment in April 2012, with the latest data showing how, as a whole, 1,222 of the 1,352 young people supported (90%) were still in a positive destination at the end of January 2014. All of the young people who did not progress into year 12 or disengaged after initially progressing have been offered support by the Youth Support Service, which provides a casemanagement service for all young people in Surrey who are currently NEET. This support will continue until they enter sustained participation, or finish year 14.

Of course, in evaluating the outcomes of public services, and especially preventative services like CBYW and LPF, it is important to recognise that it is very difficult to know what would happen in the absence of those services (the ‘counterfactual’). This means that, although outcomes can be measured for most of these services, it is difficult to attribute

these changes as impacts achieved by the service in question, since these outcomes are likely to have been influenced by other public interventions or indeed a wide range of external influences. Although there is good circumstantial evidence to suggest that real improvements have been achieved, it is important to bear this caveat in mind when interpreting the evidence. However, there are some examples where the outcomes achieved seem very strongly associated with the intervention – one such example is given in the case study of the impact of an IPG in Spelthorne.

#### MINI-CASE STUDY: Impact of Individual Prevention Grants in Spelthorne in Surrey

During 2012, the Youth Support Service (YSS) found they struggled with a lack of flexible financial resources to meet young people's immediate and often practical short-term needs. In response, SYP established the Individual Prevention Grants (IPGs) programme from April 2013. IPGs provide flexible funding to remove barriers to participation for young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. These barriers can be simple and practical, such as the cost of transport to attend an interview, food during the college day or equipment needed to access a specialist course, or they can be related to young people's personal development and wellbeing, such as a lack of self-confidence or damaged family relationships. Each local YSS Team has had an allocated budget, set in consultation with Local Committees, to be used flexibly during 2013/14 to support individual young people or, in some cases, groups who face barriers to accessing education or employment.

Whatever challenges young people face, the IPG can be a valuable part of the wider co-produced, solution to help young people participate. A particular example of this comes from Spelthorne Borough. Council Kelly first presented as NEET to the YSS in the autumn of 2012. She had a statement of Special Educational Need when in school, due to a visual impairment, and had moved schools on a number of occasions due to bullying and some behaviour issues. Her education was further affected by her father suffering a terminal illness when she was 15. As a result Kelly emerged with low level GCSE's that did not do justice to her potential.

Her Youth Support Officer (YSO) recognised early on that Kelly had strong interpersonal skills and was willing to try things. Having had some periods of temporary work in early 2013, Kelly enrolled onto a food hygiene course with the YSS in July 2013. Travel was a major barrier to Kelly due to her visual impairment and resulting lack of confidence. IPG money was initially used to fund a taxi so she could attend the course. Over time, as her confidence built, her worker suggested she try travelling by public transport, to which she agreed. She started travelling by bus, supported at first by her YSO, and then entirely independently. Both the cost of this transport and the cost of taking her food hygiene certificate were met through an Individual Prevention Grant. Kelly went on to secure full time permanent employment as a shop assistant and is currently doing a diploma in customer service. She travels independently by bus every day. Although her case is now closed to the Youth Support Service she keeps in touch with her worker to advise on how she is progressing. The Individual Prevention Grant has been fundamental to Kelly gaining employment and building her self-confidence and independence.

In most instances, however, it is not as easy as in the Spelthorne case study to attribute changes in outcomes to the interventions made by a public agency. This is a key reason why Surrey chose the highly innovative route of developing logframes for each of its SYP programmes – a very rigorous approach to demonstrating the cause-and-effect relationships between the intervention and the results which it achieves. Unless a convincing case can be made, through a logical and plausible logframe analysis, that the intervention is likely to have positive effects on desired outcomes, it is imprudent to spend public money on those interventions. Nevertheless, we need to remain aware that these 'convincing cases' remain speculative. Over time, of course, we can hope that evidence can be accumulated which can test out these speculative analyses – and the logframes can provide a useful framework for this analysis.

The 'logframe' models were therefore at the heart of the initial analysis of how NEETs were to be reduced and the subsequent analysis of why some difficulties arose in achieving this. While the logframe approach is often talked about in local government evaluations, this is the most developed and thorough example of its application which we have seen

in local government. Although the logframes were not always immediately understood and appreciated by staff in SYP and in the provider organisations, these logframes gave an underpinning logic to the decisions made on how to move ‘from NEET to PETE’ across many different settings and groups of young people in Surrey. They represented a highly innovative way of ensuring an outcome orientation in SYP, in which all activities were challenged to demonstrate what contribution they made to the pathways to outcomes for young people.

However, the emphasis on ‘from NEET to PETE’ is not the whole of the picture. As the Spelthorne case study shows, other outcomes matter, too. While most councillors and staff in Surrey County Council to whom we have talked regard this as the continuing no. 1 priority for SYP, some interviewees stressed that these other outcomes may become more important in the future. For example, some senior staff emphasised that CBYW was not simply aimed at achieving PETE and that a much wider range of outcomes is considered in taking a holistic approach to the quality of life of young people. One interviewee said: “The Quality Mark assessment has taught us that youth centres are doing a huge amount of work related to drugs, sexual health and exploitation, self-harming, emotional wellbeing – this should be recognised by public health and the CCG, each of which has targets (and funding streams) around these outcomes”. Another interviewee expressed the same idea more briefly: “We promote “participation in life, not just in education, training and employment”). However, this is not consistently the case across all staff. Indeed, the interviews made clear that the outcomes framework has not yet become an operational reality for all front-line staff who deal with young people on a daily basis.

Moreover, it was recognised that moving to a wider range of outcomes would involve a more difficult performance measurement task, taking into account longer term, ‘fuzzier’ and perceptual dimensions of the quality of life of young people. These issues are being tackled in the new outcomes framework, which embodies the full range of outcomes in the original *Every Child Matters* statutory outcomes framework, including employability, resilience, safety, community engagement, etc. This is considered in Part 3. In the meantime, more mundane milestones can still be used, such as Quality Mark for youth centres, where 26 of 31 in Surrey have already achieved the basic level and over 20 centres are expected to achieve level 2 (out of 3) during 2014 – this may not indicate outcomes but it does reassure elected members and managers that the basic inputs and activities are in line with expectations.

**Table 4. Summary of findings of Internal Review 2013 (by Chris Tisdall and Rich Stockley)**

Services in SYP	Key findings	Analysis of secondary data, survey findings and qualitative analysis
Youth Support Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Working in partnership with other SYP commissions and partners, the YSS has reduced the number of young people who are NEET by more than 50% between October 2012 and October 2013.</li> <li>■ Surrey had the lowest number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System per 1,000 population in England during 2012/13</li> <li>■ 328 young people who presented as homeless have been placed in safe accommodation since November 2012</li> <li>■ The YSS has so far taken on case management of 172 young people who are Children in Need</li> <li>■ The number of young people whose current activity is unknown was 65% lower in August 2013 than it was in August 2012.</li> <li>■ On the 12th of November 2013, our new re-engagement offer was preventing 407 young people from being NEET and engaging the positive, progression focussed activity.</li> </ul>	
Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development (SOLD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lessons learnt from 2012/13 are expected to lead to improvement in take-up in 2013/14</li> <li>■ 195 young people so far involved in SOLD local offer for 2013/14</li> </ul>	

Services in SYP	Key findings	Analysis of secondary data, survey findings and qualitative analysis
<b>Centre Based Youth Work (CBYW)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improvement in quality of CBYW as a result of implementing Surrey Quality Mark, independently verified by the National Youth Agency (NYA)</li> <li>■ Important early help role of CBYW, engaging with young people from a range of priority and vulnerable groups, including those who are NEET, in Ready for Work, at risk of being NEET, who are Children in Need, involved in offending and who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</li> <li>■ Positive impact of CBYW on young people's absence from school indicated by analysis, with particular impact being felt by those with SEND</li> <li>■ Regarded as providing a broad range of young people with a safe location to socialise who overwhelming saw it as having tangible benefits for their participation and behaviour</li> <li>■ Co-production encourages attendance and participation but older groups, who are more likely to be 'at risk' may feel they are too old to attend</li> </ul>	<p>Overwhelmingly, young people thought that youth workers were effective at co-producing services and in all locations involved in the research, young people were able to evidence involvement in co-production. All young people who took part in the survey stated that they had enough input into the services that were provided by the centre.</p> <p>Where young people were keen to get involved, youth workers encouraged them to join 'steering committees' and become partners in the running of the centre. These young people took on a range of duties including representing other young people's views, interviewing candidates for youth worker roles as well as fundraising and representation on youth task groups. These young people found the experience broadly positive and felt that they gained valuable experiences from being involved in this way.</p>
<b>Skills Centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Just under half of the 102 young people who had completed Skills Centre programmes had made a successful transition into ETE following completion of their programme and were still participating in October 2013</li> <li>■ Young people and providers were very clear about what skills or opportunities could be gained and the learning environment was appreciated for being more conducive to the learning preferences of young people</li> <li>■ There were obvious and tangible benefits in attending and the young people interviewed regarded it as an opportunity to help them find work</li> <li>■ Those who lack commitment tend to drop out early on or do not participate at all</li> </ul>	<p>There was little evidence of co-production demonstrated by young people during the discussion groups. The consensus at both groups was that the Skills Centre provided what staff thought would benefit young people in the local area. If this did not fit with what young people wanted to do, then there seemed to be an absence of a mechanism to influence the service provided.</p>
<b>Local Prevention Framework (LPF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Across the county the LPF engaged with enough young people to achieve 155% of its agreed performance level for the duration of the contract.</li> <li>■ 12 of the 14 providers met or exceeded their 85% agreed performance levels.</li> <li>■ Our analysis suggests that 40% of young people involved in LPF have SEND and 28% have been or are currently Children in Need.</li> <li>■ Positive impact of engagement with LPF on school absence and in particular for those on School Action Plus – 51% of this group accessing LPF had lower absence in 2013 than 2012, compared to only 43% for young people on School Action Plus in the overall population, a statistically significant difference.</li> <li>■ A similar number of young people accessing LPF received fixed term exclusions in 2012/13 (261 young people) as in 2011/12 (260 young people), but the average days young people had been excluded was less in 2012/13 (5.4 days) than in 2011/12 (6.1 days).</li> <li>■ 42% of young people engaging in LPF had lower school absence in 2012/13 than in 2011/12, slightly better than 38% for the population as a whole. Although a small difference, it is probably statistically significant. Although this difference cannot conclusively be attributed to LPF, it is a reasonable indication that engagement with LPF has a positive effect on young people's school attendance.</li> <li>■ Co-produced activities were the best method of encouraging participation but young people thought many 'at risk' young people who could attend either did not know about provision or weren't interested in attending</li> <li>■ Those who did attend were very committed and recognised clear benefits of provision in building skills</li> </ul>	<p>While services were co-produced by all providers, each provider had its own approach, providing differing levels of depth in terms of co-production. Some gave young people a list of activities to choose from, while others got them much more involved in discussing what they might like to do and then developing activities from there. Where a provider made co-production a core part of their offer to young people, there was a considerable amount of enthusiasm about getting involved and once involved in the process young people became increasingly keen to have their say.</p> <p>However, where co-production is less comprehensive some young people become apathetic about activities organised.</p>

Services in SYP	Key findings	Analysis of secondary data, survey findings and qualitative analysis
<p><b>Youth Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Although by a number of measures Year 1 performance of this contract was below what was expected, there was significant improvement in performance for Year 2 of the contract and the provider is on track to meet its commitments for 2013/14.</li> <li>■ Over 52,000 Surrey young people have been informed about key decisions in their lives since April 2013.</li> <li>■ Over half of U-Explore users (54.1%) are aged 14 or 15 and 9 in 10 (88.4%) are confident in accessing the website and more than half (56%) strongly agree that the site provides useful careers and / or education information with only 1 in 20 (5.1%) disagreeing</li> <li>■ However, around three quarters (73.5%) of young people thought that new users ideally needed someone to show them how to use the site in order to get the most benefit from it.</li> <li>■ Young people lack a point of reference to inform them about what particular career paths are like. The career case studies on U-Explore offer this information and 4 in 5 young people (81.9%) say it's the first place they think of to access IAG</li> <li>■ There opportunity to improve value of IAG on surge by creating material to compliment content on U-Explore and Surge has potential to provide more real life examples of what it's like to do certain jobs or do certain courses</li> <li>■ Young people feel co-production adds validity for users. Surge presents what's important to young people. However, some young people do not see the value of surge above other social networking sites such as facebook</li> </ul>	<p>U-Explore recruit young people in schools and colleges to volunteer as champions and classroom experts, offering help and advice to other young people on how to get the most out of the website. Over 47% said that they would be interested in receiving advice from a U-Explore Champion and 35% said they would be interested in volunteering as a champion themselves</p> <p>Co-production on the Surge site was regarded as excellent by all of the young people present at the discussion group. Young people were aware that information and ideas are constantly being submitted by their peers and that the site is being developed as a direct result of this.</p> <p>Soliciting the views of young people in terms of their feedback on the website and their opinions on important issues for young people felt awkward by comparison.</p>
<p><b>Year 11/12 Transition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 89.8% of young people at risk of becoming NEET who received support from the Year 11/12 Transition commission were PETE in the January following their transition</li> <li>■ An overall reduction in Year 12 NEET for the period January to March 2013 of 15%, compared to the previous year</li> <li>■ Particular success of East Surrey College (ESC) in supporting young people with SEND into PETE</li> <li>■ The cohort of young people supported by Working Links had slightly higher incidence of NEET risk factors than that supported by ESC</li> </ul>	<p>Looking at the NEET cohort overall, the proportion of young people with five A*-C grades who were NEET increased by seven percentage points from 9% to 16% and there were increases in the proportion of young people who were Children in Need, on Child Protection Plans and Looked After</p> <p>The support that young people received in Year 11 was regarded highly, with almost 19 in 20 (93.8%) young people who completed the survey saying that the quality of support that was offered to them, to help make the transition from Year 11 to 12, was either good or very good.</p> <p>Following their transition to Year 12, a similarly high number of young people thought that there was a good level of high quality of support provided by mentors, with more than 9 in 10 (91.5%) saying it was either good or very good.</p>
<p><b>Individual prevention grants</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Since April 2013, 374 individual prevention grants have been made to young people who were NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.</li> <li>■ Of the 222 named individuals who received IPGs between April and October 2013, only 3 were NEET and 67 were engaged in the Ready 4 Work curriculum on 21 November 2013. This indicates a 68% rate at moving young people from NEET to full participation.</li> <li>■ The IPG pilot in Runnymede had 60% success rate at moving young people who were NEET into full participation</li> </ul>	<p>Between April and October, there has been an average monthly conversion rate of 24% of NEET young people moving into PETE.</p>

## 2.5. EVALUATION OF EFFICIENCY IN PHASE 2

The previous section highlights the major improvements in outcomes which have been achieved in SYP since January 2012. At the same time, major budget decreases have occurred – a £4.5m reduction, representing 25% of the budget. In spite of this budget reduction, frontline services were improved – for example, by 2013 the number of professionals working directly with vulnerable young people had actually risen, compared to 2009. Again, 26 youth centres have achieved the National Youth Agency Quality Mark Level 1, demonstrating a standard equivalent to an Ofsted rating of ‘good’ (no Surrey youth centre had secured this rating before) and surveys showed high satisfaction by young people with the new centres. These improvements to the level of service outputs and service quality, simultaneously with a large budget reduction, illustrate the major improvements in efficiency which have been achieved through the recommissioning of SYP.

There have been a mix of drivers which have led to this efficiency improvement. They include:

- Focusing more directly on the priority outcomes, so being able to jettison activities which do not contribute to those outcomes
- Externalising parts of SYP to the third sector, where the expertise of external providers can be harnessed, often at lower operating cost than in statutory services and dispensing with the need for some overhead costs in Surrey County Council
- Encouraging a different mix of staff in providers, many of whom had a different way of working from the previous staff (although some providers suggested this still had some way to go).
- Working in close partnership with providers, in order to ensure that all barriers to service improvement are identified and quickly removed.
- Designing and operating a clear and relevant performance management system to provide early warning of unsatisfactory performance and focus discussions on what can be done to produce improvements
- Keeping the commissioning and procurement processes flexible, so that new approaches can be tried where necessary – e.g. when the two-stage process for LPF contracts did not seem to be delivering, this was quickly replaced by a more streamlined process.
- Engaging young people in a co-production approach, making use of their knowledge, expertise, commitment and enthusiasm to co-commission, co-design, co-deliver and co-assess the service in ways that make it lower cost as well as producing better outcomes.

It is more difficult, however, to identify the specific influence which each of these efficiency drivers has exerted. In most services a number of these efficiency drivers have occurred together, so that their influence has been simultaneous and the influence of separate drivers cannot be unpicked from this overall approach. Moreover, most of our interviewees focused mainly on the outcomes improvements, when discussing the results of the recommissioning process. Few had appeared to give much thought to the ways in which efficiencies had been gained in the transformation process. This may be a good thing, in that the clear-sighted and ruthless pursuit of outcome improvements may be a highly productive way of achieving a cost-effective service, rather than narrowly pursuing efficiency improvements. However, it does seem likely that more attention might usefully be given in the next round of commissioning to which sources of efficiency improvement in SYP have been most important and how further efficiency improvements might now be gleaned in SYP.

## 2.6. OVERALL ASSESSMENT: SUITABILITY OF THE DESIGN OF THE NEW COMMISSIONING MODELS

Taking together this performance information and feedback from different stakeholders about the various services for young people, our overall evaluation is that the new model has produced outstanding results to date and been cost effective in achieving a significant reduction in NEETs and improvements to most other outcomes.

This reflects positively on the way the services were designed to focus on the central outcome of moving young people 'from NEET to PETE', as well as ensuring services are now much more targeted on the 'One in Ten' young people in greatest need in the county. As has been described previously in this evaluation, the Logical Framework approach that is at the heart of commission design in SYP has provided a clear approach to ensure that all commissioned services contribute towards increasing young people's participation in education, training or employment. The impact of this approach is very clearly reflected in the design of, for instance, the Year 11/12 Transition Commission. The mini-case study on Targeted support for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET through the Year 11/12 Transition Commission in Surrey (see section 2.4) provides a telling illustration of where a model has been designed to meet a specific need and had a successful impact on priority outcomes.

Furthermore, the model has proved flexible and demonstrated its ability to innovate since its establishment early in 2012, responding to both the changing environment and the changing needs of young people. Where doubts arose about performance of the LPF, a rapid response was made, changing the model and recommissioning the services in a way which quickly proved to be effective. In response to the need for flexible resources to remove barriers to participation for young people, the Individual Prevention Grants were commissioned. And to respond to identified gaps in support for young people who are at risk of homelessness and Children in Need, working with partners, the YSS has been able to flex its resources and structures to meet the holistic needs of these young people. When the cost of food was highlighted as a potential barrier to learning for students who chose college rather than school sixth form, Surrey CC introduced a Free Meals for Year 12 initiative, which enabled young people from families with lower incomes to benefit from free meals whichever education route they chose. This initiative was featured in the Times Educational Supplement and met with such acclaim that, alongside a campaign by the Association of Colleges, it has driven national policy change, with free meals for disadvantaged learners being introduced from September 2014. These larger scale examples are set alongside a range of local, smaller scale responses where different parts of the SYP operating model have collaborated effectively, both internally and externally, or developed their delivery to respond to changing need.

However, this overall success needs to be examined in more depth. In particular, three distinctive characteristics of the Surrey approach to SYP need to be unpacked in order to see what has worked best and which elements of the model need further attention: the approaches to outcomes based management, user and community co-production and partnership working. These will be explored in more depth in Part Three, along with key areas for future improvement and learning and lessons for the current recommissioning process.

# *Part Three*

**LESSONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND NEXT STEPS IN PHASE 3**

## III. LESSONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND NEXT STEPS IN PHASE 3: COMPLETING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION



### 1. OVERALL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS

This evaluation has demonstrated that the recommissioning of Services for Young People (SYP) in Surrey has produced outstanding results to date. However, the findings from this evaluation provide a number of lessons for improvement in the next round of commissioning of SYP, which will be Phase 3 in the strategic transformation process. They include:

#### GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- There will be a need for a different leadership style to keep the transformation process on course, with more leadership being shown throughout SYP. However, if a new round of radical change is intended, e.g. to give co-production by young people a much larger role in SYP or to greatly increase the level of efficiency in existing services, then there will remain a need for strong and co-ordinated leadership from the top of the service, both politically and organisationally.
- The role of third sector as partners, not just external providers, needs to be built more explicitly into the commissioning process.
- There is a need for more interactive working with providers in service design and improvement partnerships.
- The level of detail in specifications for commissioned services and performance management frameworks needs to be reconsidered, as it is currently very high. Where outcomes-based contracts are agreed, these specifications may need to be made much looser to allow appropriate experimentation and creativity.
- Communications – internally and externally – are fundamentally important. Although a very intense communications campaign was launched and sustained in the first round of recommissioning, there was much misinformation and high levels of misunderstanding even amongst elected members and certainly amongst many of the staff affected – this is less likely to be a problem next time round but it will still need careful attention. It will be necessary to have a robust communications plan that identifies all key stakeholders, describes how to engage with them and why we are talking to them – and it will also be essential to bring in the media.
- Website approaches and social media have not been as successful as initially hoped, so there is now a need to rethink the balance and try a wider variety of approaches which more successfully engage both young people and professionals working with them, with appropriate changes to the communications strategies and protocols of the Council and its partners.

#### OUTCOMES ISSUES

- It should be possible in the next round of commissioning to set up contracts around the outcomes in the new outcomes framework (e.g. employability, resilience, safety, community engagement, etc.). This will give the opportunity for a broader range of activities to be promoted within the contracts, so that a wider range of outcomes can be successfully addressed.

- A further consequence of moving to the new outcomes framework may be that outcomes could be prioritised at local level, through some local governance arrangements (e.g. Local Youth Task Groups). This might even allow a local tendering process against these priority outcomes, with relatively few constraints (except for pointing out local assets like Youth Centres). It might even be possible for a wider range of local authority commissioning managers to join in this process, allowing some of their budgets to be used for joint commissioning decisions at neighbourhood level or in joint commissioning exercises with priority target groups.
- It will be important to pay increased attention to ‘transitions’ as a focus of SYP activity, which will mean giving more attention to the outcomes which are prioritised by Adult Services in Surrey County Council, and exploring an increased role for inter-generational initiatives.

#### CO-PRODUCTION ISSUES

- There will be a need for a more systematic approach to user and community co-production, embedded within both commissioning and contracting.
- This is likely to require the production and implementation of co-production toolkits for different SYP programmes, both to standardise understanding of co-production and to allow new co-production initiatives to be designed and implemented quickly within SYP by staff and young people.
- It may even be appropriate to consider community budgeting in some areas where there may be access to extra resources – e.g. Walton, where a local charity has a capital and revenue budget which might be appropriate as a starting point for pooling budgets between agencies. This would allow local people to have some say in the prioritising of the spending from that budget.

#### EFFICIENCY ISSUES

- There is a high level of transactions costs in dealing with third sector partners – there is a need to consider how to reduce these, if possible.
- The role of SCC staff transfers needs to be reconsidered – these have had a mixed reaction, with some providers coming to value the staff transferred in but some providers continuing to believe that this has been an unwelcome imposition. While it is a bonus that this ambitious approach has worked in many cases, it may be important to have available other approaches as well in future externalisations.
- There is a potential for more flexibility in the ‘model’ in the future (e.g. on issues such as whether some Youth Centres might be allowed to open before 16.00). This would not only allow more efficient ways of operating to be adopted in specific locations but would allow experimentation from which the whole service could learn.

## 2. TAKING FURTHER THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In the rest of this section, we focus in detail on three major elements of the transformation model which now appear ripe to be taken further and which offer the potential for similar advances as those achieved in the last two years: If the opportunity is now taken to pursue these improvements, the cultural transformation which has already happened in Services for Young People in Surrey can be taken to a new level.

- Management by outcomes
- Embedding co-production in SYP
- Improving partnership working in SYP

### 3. WIDENING AND DEEPENING THE OUTCOME ORIENTATION IN SYP

The transformation process for SYP has already demonstrated major improvements from 2012 onwards, particularly to the key outcome of reducing NEETs. Indeed, the level of NEETs is now so low (joint lowest in England) that it now seems time to consider giving priority to a wider range of outcomes for young people.

It is therefore encouraging that the new outcomes framework for young people in Surrey (Table 5) makes clear the wider range of outcomes which are important. This is an important advance. It gives prominence to almost all the statutory outcomes in the *Every Child Matters* (ECM) approach.

However, the ‘Enjoy’ element of the ECM outcome ‘Enjoy and Achieve’ is only weakly represented and the educational dimensions of the ‘Achieve’ element are rather limited. There is a strong argument for including these here, even if they are also included in other outcome frameworks in the Council, in order that SYP take a rounded approach to achieving outcomes which feed into the holistic quality of life of the young people with whom they work.

There is also a case for having an overall indicator of quality of life of young people (or several), perhaps as an extension of the ‘wellbeing’ indicators in this new framework, or perhaps as a separate overarching outcome, in line with the ‘wellbeing’ or ‘happiness’ subjective indicators which have been developed by ONS over recent years.

**Table 5. The new outcomes framework for young people in Surrey, 2014**

**Goal: Employability for young people in the 21st Century**

	Outcomes	Output
1	Young people are equipped with the skills and attitudes to join the 21st century workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sufficient, quality education and training post-16 provided</li> <li>■ Successful transition made to post-16 education, training and employment</li> <li>■ Employability skills, attitudes and behaviours developed</li> <li>■ Numeracy and literacy improved</li> <li>■ Increased experience of the workplace</li> </ul>
2	Young people are resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Physical wellbeing improved</li> <li>■ Emotional wellbeing improved</li> <li>■ Mental wellbeing improved</li> <li>■ Social wellbeing improved</li> </ul>
3	Young people are safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Offending and anti-social behaviour prevented</li> <li>■ Reduced impact of offending</li> <li>■ Young people's safety in communities is improved</li> </ul>
4	Young people overcome barriers to employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Young people prevented from becoming NEET</li> <li>■ Reduced number of young people are NEET</li> <li>■ Homelessness prevented</li> <li>■ Entry to the care system prevented</li> <li>■ Transport for young people improved</li> </ul>
5	Young people make informed decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Informed decisions made about education, training and careers</li> <li>■ Informed decisions made about leading a healthy lifestyle</li> <li>■ Informed decisions made about use of free time</li> <li>■ Informed decisions made about accessing services and support</li> </ul>
6	Young people are active members of their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Young people have positive role models</li> <li>■ Participation in social action increased</li> <li>■ Decision-making influenced by young people</li> <li>■ Involvement in local democracy increased</li> </ul>

There will be a number of challenges in introducing and making best use of this new outcomes framework:

1. The *priorities within this list of outcomes* will need to be made clear. With the history in SYP of giving priority to reduction of NEETs, it may be difficult to convince stakeholders, both internal and external, that now other outcomes for young people are genuinely being prioritised. A number of steps are likely to be needed to ensure that this change in direction is taken seriously:
  - a. Leading elected members and top managers within in SYP will need to demonstrate their commitment to the new outcome priorities.
  - b. The new priorities will need to be finally decided in a consultation process with young people (as part of 'embedding co-commissioning') and with other agencies involved as service commissioners (as part of improved partnership working).
  - c. Some funding will need to be reoriented towards the outcomes which are now being given a higher priority – this will not need to be major funding streams but some budget reallocation will have a symbolic effect.
2. As these six major outcomes are strongly interconnected, the *relationships between the outcomes* will need to be recognised and managed:
  - a. How does the employability goal relate to other goals in the Council? It will be important to show SYP's assumptions about which outcomes are most important in contributing to the employability goal.
  - b. Appropriate logframes therefore need to be developed which show these inter-relationships.
  - c. Generally, each intervention programme will need to be shown as achieving a portfolio of outcomes, not simply one primary outcome (although there may be the occasional exception).
  - d. These inter-relationships will need to be analysed and refined in consultation with partners and other key stakeholders, including young people and service providers, as they will have a major influence on the performance framework, the payment systems and, eventually, the recorded level of performance of SYP.
3. *The complexity of having several priority outcomes, which are themselves inter-related, will make the focus on outcomes harder to manage* than when the outcomes orientation simply meant 'from NEET to PETE'. However, there are several steps which can be taken to help in dealing with this complexity:
  - a. Separate funding streams can be established for different outcomes, so that the priorities of Surrey CC are clear to all partners and key stakeholders.
  - b. Commissioners and funders of relevant services for young people can pool, or at least align, their funding streams for each outcome, so that providers know what level of funding is available for different outcomes and can tailor their service offers accordingly.
  - c. Contracts with providers can incorporate partial funding by outcomes, in a form of 'payment by results', e.g. YSS and CBYW programmes, so that providers are encouraged to make separate bids to achieve improvements in each of the key outcomes.
  - d. The performance management framework should continue to be based on 'conversations', rather than purely 'specification and target management', but with more emphasis on learning how to achieve higher outcomes in the future – but, if this is achieved, then an even wider range of relevant OVIs (objectively verifiable indicators) might be introduced as relevant to the outputs and outcomes, without descending into the games-playing promoted by target-based management.
  - e. Over time, the emphasis on wider outcomes will require a more sophisticated performance measurement approach, taking into account the longer term, 'fuzzier' and perceptual dimensions of the quality of life of young people. In order to focus on the most important performance indicators, young people themselves, as well as partners and other key stakeholders will need to be involved in their selection and interpretation.

#### 4. EMBEDDING CO-PRODUCTION IN SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND BEYOND

While there is a strong commitment to the basic idea of co-production, phases 1 and 2 of the transformation of SYP focussed on wider systems change. The challenge for phase 3 is to consolidate what has been achieved and to take it to the next level. Co-production may play a key role in achieving another step change in SYP if initiatives are taken to embed co-production in SYP through a carefully designed top-down and bottom-up change management process.

As a first step, SYP and key partners need to develop a shared understanding and language for co-production which differentiates co-production with young people and communities from partnership working between organisations. The interviews revealed that at present, there is not a fully shared understanding of the meaning of co-production and that in many cases, the concept of co-production overlaps with participation or consultation. For example, many interviews thought that co-production is about “giving a voice to young people”. While this is an important element of co-production, co-production goes beyond ‘listening’ to young people. In particular, co-production puts the focus on ‘doing stuff’ which may be an attractive option for many young people in Surrey CC.

Given our conclusion in Part 2 that there are staff cultures supporting the concept of co-production but also pockets in organisations believing that ‘experts know what’s best for young people’, there is a need to train service providers and commissioners in the use of co-production tools and methodologies in order to scale up co-production with young people. This may involve training social and youth support workers on how to undertake asset-mapping of young people to ensure that consistent profiles of young people, with their strengths and assets, are created across Surrey County Council. This can be done through structured conversations, as Walsall Council did with the ‘See What You Can Do’ Toolkit of *Governance International*. As long as this only happens on an informal basis and is done unsystematically it will be difficult to make a difference through co-production.

This kind of ‘What I can do’ profile of young people would allow SYP and partners to target young people much more effectively and make them ‘offers’ which suit their strengths and interests. As an evaluation report of the Local Prevention Framework highlights, there is a need to find better mechanisms for making co-production offers to young people:

“In order to avoid the criticisms that the involvement of young people is a tokenistic attempt at soliciting their support, there needs to be a better mechanism for their **inclusion** in the process. Membership of the YTG is not necessarily the answer and an assessment should be undertaken as to how best involve young people” (Review of the Local Prevention Framework, Appendix 1, p. 20)

Indeed, analysis of the documentation provided by Surrey County Council shows that the term ‘needs’ is still very dominant in SYP, while the terms ‘assets’, ‘capabilities’ or ‘resources of young people’ are used much less frequently. However, identifying and recognising the assets of young people will be key for developing effective peer support approaches which make better use of the contributions of professionals, young people and the communities they live in.

It will also be important to give some generic guidance about ways in which co-production can be built into the commissioning process and into contracts, given that there is still considerable lack of understanding (and even confusion) about this.

We suggest that SYP starts an online and offline dialogue on what co-production has to offer to young people and local communities and what it means for them by engaging all stakeholders in a creative mapping process which may be labelled MANY ASSETS to build on ONE IN TEN. The case studies from Surrey CC compiled for this evaluation provide useful inputs to trigger interest and imagination for new co-production approaches.

This corresponds to Step 1 in the *Governance International* Co-production Star which sets out a five-step model for embedding co-production in SYP and beyond (see Figure 5 on page 6).

**STEP 1: 'MAP IT!'**

We typically find in our training and coaching that co-production is already happening in every organisation and community – but only here and there, in pockets. This means that it's really important for councillors, staff and local communities to map the way in which they collaborate with each other, so that they can build on what works to avoid re-inventing the wheel. A mapping tool such as the [Co-Production Explorer](#) supports the creative process of exploring new scenarios and devising ways to make this new vision real by building on existing practices of co-production.

Furthermore, it was striking that most interviewees had difficulties identifying good practice cases of co-production during the interview. This does not mean that such good practice cases do not exist but it appears that there has so far been little communication and learning from existing examples of co-production with young people. However, in order to scale up co-production of SYP (and beyond) in Surrey County Council, it will be key to build on what works already and also to explore how existing co-production approaches can be developed further. Many interviewees suggested that young people were mainly engaged in the co-planning and co-design process but that there is still a lot of scope for developing the involvement of young people in service co-delivery and co-assessment.

**STEP 2: 'FOCUS IT!'**

After mapping what is happening and what needs to happen – public services need to prioritise their efforts to take co-production further, in order to make sure that resource investments are based on evidence. A decision tool such as our [Co-Production Priority Matrix](#) is a simple technique to prioritise coproduction activities – distinguishing priority projects to be taken on, and those to be dropped or put on the back burner. 'Quick wins' (high impact, low effort initiatives) are self-evidently the optimal starting point – establishing success, to catalyse further co-production.

**STEP 3: 'PEOPLE IT!'**

Here we need to ask: How can we involve the right people in local communities and organisations in the public, third and private sectors to contribute to improved public services and outcomes? Tools such as the [Governance International Community Asset Survey](#) help identify what local communities are already doing and how they want to get involved more. The [See What You Can Do-Toolkit](#) which *Governance International* piloted with Walsall MBC supports service users to identify interesting activities that could help others and to find matching partners to to enrich their own social lives and make the most of their own capabilities. Having identified these key people who want to help make co-production really work, it is important to bring them together in 'Co-Production Labs', so that together they can design action plans to take priority initiatives further .

**STEP 4: 'MARKET IT!'**

Having reached this stage, we have to make it simple and worthwhile for people to contribute and collaborate with others. This stage is often missing from current co-production approaches. Incentives and nudges are really crucial to encouraging behaviour change. There are lots of different kinds of incentives: *psychological incentives*, which reinforce an individual's 'feel good factor' with appreciation or other informal rewards; or more formal mechanisms like '*recognition awards*', which could include prizes or vouchers of local business.

Another way of encouraging individuals and groups to put co-production principles into practice is to agree *Co-Production Charters* that outline explicitly the roles, responsibilities, and conflict mechanisms for staff, communities and individuals. These can provide an effective framework to show people what responsibilities they are committing to – and what the local council or third sector provider is committing to provide by way of support to those who work with it.

**STEP 5: 'GROW IT!'**

Once the co-production ball is rolling, the momentum for culture change needs to be kept up and even increased. This involves highlighting the impact of co-production and celebrating success by showcasing 'champions' or delivering road shows at neighbourhood level.

At the same time, ‘systems change’ needs to take place to support co-production. The creation of an outcomes-based framework provides SYP with a management system which is a big shift from the traditional system focussing on process. The revision of the outcomes-based framework in the next round of commissioning may focus even more on co-production elements such as the strengths and resilience of young people rather than need and risks. Furthermore, the outcomes-based framework also needs to be translated into a competency framework so that current and new staff are aware of expected forms of behaviour.

#### MINI-CASE STUDY: Excerpt from “Behaviours for the Cooperative Council”

##### Empathy

This behaviour is about sensing others’ feelings and perspectives and taking an active interest in their concerns. It is the ability to accurately hear and understand the unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings and concerns of others. It is also the ability to see things from someone else’s perspective and recognise the underlying reasons for why someone might say or do the things they do.

Why is it important? If we are to genuinely engage with citizens then we need to be able to ‘put ourselves in their shoes’. We need to be able to respond and communicate to citizens in a way that they themselves would like to be treated – politely and respectfully, and where appropriate, with warmth and compassion. Empathy will be particularly important if we are to engage and involve some of the most vulnerable individuals in the Borough who may not be able fully to express or articulate their thoughts or feelings.

Below are indicative examples:

##### LEVEL 1

- Listens to others
- Listens attentively and responds calmly and professionally

##### LEVEL 2

- Understands emotions
- Recognises ‘non verbal’ cues such as body language, tone of voice or facial expression and ‘reads’ these to understand what someone is actually feeling but not necessarily expressing

##### LEVEL 3

- Understands meanings
- Makes inferences that go beyond the explicit content or emotion being expressed
- Can interpret and understand poorly expressed thoughts, concerns or feelings
- Is able to relate to people from a wide range of diverse backgrounds

##### LEVEL 4

- Understands underlying issues
- Displays an in-depth understanding of the ongoing reasons for a person’s behaviour or response to a situation
- Is able to see things from someone else’s perspective and challenges own thinking as a result of this

Source: Website of London Borough of Lambeth

A systematic roll-out of co-production with young people also needs to be embedded in partnership working with adult social care and other public services, such as housing and leisure services, in order to enable an improvement to the holistic wellbeing of young people.

It is encouraging that the ‘stories’ provided by a number of youth support workers in Surrey CC suggest that professionals have already been very successful in building positive relationships with young people and signposting young

people to specific support services which address their needs. It is obvious from these stories that the context of most young people described in the case studies is one of challenging family relationships with family members who themselves face serious challenges. It is striking, though, that the holistic family-centered approach as described in the 'Story' below appears rather to be the exception than the rule.

#### MINI-CASE STUDY: Story from a youth worker on case management in Ashford in Surrey

Through linking in with A2E I made contact with the key worker to MK who is twelve years old and lives in Ashford. MK attends Ashford during the day as she is not attending main stream school. A2E provide educational support to her, taking a holistic approach to MK's needs. I made A2E aware of our half-term activities and promoted our youth projects, programmes and activities to their young people. After one of A2E sessions, I met MK's mother and invited the family down the next day to see what additional support we could provide to them.

MK came to the centre with her mother and brother. As the centre was empty, I decided to invite the family to stay. Whilst the two young people played, MK's mother said she felt guilty about MK. It transpired that MK's older sibling was bullied at school to the point where he was hospitalised. The fear of this happening again resulted in MK not yet being enrolled in secondary school, although Thomas Knyvett School has offered a place. I suggested that MK should link into the youth project to encourage MK to mix with her peers in a small group format.

MK has attended four sessions and is a member of a group at Ashford Youth Centre. She still attends A2E sessions during the day but every Thursday for two hours she mixes with her peers and takes part in workshops at Ashford Youth Centre. She will be returning to mainstream schooling in September. We will support her to make this transition through our work with her in the group.

Although the above example is basic it demonstrates that when organisations share information appropriately and work together young people's needs can be met much more effectively. Sometimes as youth workers we get lost in the figures and can be guilty of adopting a silo mentality but we need to look at the bigger picture – we need to connect the dots and not just look in our own organisation but to other youth support agencies. We too often overlap, duplicate and miss the very basics of what we should be doing, which is to identify the need, provide the support and signpost whatever we cannot deal with ourselves. The passing-on bit seems to be where we get stuck – we either just send a very brief email about a young person who plans to pop into one of the youth support projects, or we send way too much information, with a character assessment and a note from the young person's file from every single agency. We need to find a balance; we need to match the right people and the right organisation with the young person who will benefit most from that interaction.

It is obvious that making such successful matches requires a more explicit focus on family-centred and inter-generational approaches. A number of interviewees showed a strong appetite for experimenting with such approaches. Indeed, as one interviewee suggested: "Youth Centres are great but there is also the risk that they isolate young people from the wider community and vice versa". Of course, there are also instances where bringing older and young people together did not produce any mutual benefits, e.g. where a charity for older people was placed in close vicinity to a Youth Centre.

However, inter-generational and family-centred approaches not only provide another 'layer' of support to young people but may also be used as a trigger to pool budgets with adult social care, housing and other services, where this is appropriate. Last but not least, such wider approaches, which are not specific for any one 'target group' but rather based on people's assets and interests, may also provide a strong motor for moving to a more localised 'hub' model, which can provide meeting points and activities for people of all walks of life and ages. For some young people, this would be a valuable complement to having 'their own space', e.g. in Youth Centres.

## IMPROVING EFFICIENCY THROUGH CO-PRODUCTION IN PHASE 3

Given that co-production has not been developed and supported systematically but rather practised informally by a number of managers and staff at a micro-level or been tested in a number of pilots it is difficult to assess the results achieved so far. However, national evidence on the cost-benefits of public service co-production suggest that significant further savings and/or improvement of outcomes of young people (and their families and local communities) could be achieved. It found that:

“A typical befriending service costs about £80 per older person (but) the monetary value is around £300 per person per year.”

“The cost per time bank member is less than £450 per year but the value could exceed £1300 per year.”

“The cost of a community navigator service is under £300 per person but the economic benefits amount to £900 per person in the first year.”

Source: Martin Knapp (2011): Building community capacity. The economic case. [http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/\\_library/Resources/BCC/Making\\_an\\_economic\\_case\\_doc.pdf](http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/_library/Resources/BCC/Making_an_economic_case_doc.pdf)

### 5. IMPROVING PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN SYP

Collaboration and partnership have been stressed throughout the transformation process as key to the recommissioning of Surrey SYP. We explored with a range of stakeholders in these partnerships, both within the County Council and external to it, their perceptions of how these partnerships have worked so far, using the INLOGOV partnership evaluation framework, built up from a number of commonly used partnership assessment toolkits. In Figure 4, we apply this partnership assessment framework, using the information available from the documentation and evidence from our interviews. Inevitably, evidence was not available on all of these principles or in relation to all the partnerships through which the recommissioned SYP are being delivered. We therefore agreed with the project lead at Surrey CC a list of key players in the priority partnerships and we focused our interviews mainly on assessing with these stakeholders the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships, and the implications for the next round of recommissioning of SYP.

**Figure 4. Summary of key elements of partnership working in SYP and steps needed for improvement**

Dimension	Principle	Current situation in SYP in Surrey	Steps needed for improvement
Vision	Purpose is clear, ambitious but realistic	Most partners agree that purpose of external SYP partnerships has been clear and ambitious. While at first these partnerships were seen as highly demanding, over time there has been increasing agreement from partners that their aims have indeed been realistic.	No change needed.
	Clarity of motivations, roles, capabilities and contributions	<p>Most partners agree that motivations, roles, capabilities and contributions have been agreed and have gradually become clearer over time.</p> <p>There has also been a general welcome to the values brought to SYP by many of the third sector providers, who have been distinctively different from the previous in-house providers.</p>	<p>No change needed with most existing providers but more work needed with some partners such as NHS and police.</p> <p>Need to widen appreciation of role of third sector within Surrey CC and other statutory partners. Potentially also need to use 'lead body' arrangements more often, to streamline partnership working with consortia of third sector providers.</p>
Strategy	Alignment of partners and policies around agreed strategy	<p>In most services, there has been a strong alignment of most partners around an agreed strategy.</p> <p>However, there have been some exceptions. On the health side, there is still not an interest in the role that health might play in helping young people from NEET to PETE. This might be especially important in relation to mental health, where some interviewees felt that insufficient attention had been paid and more needed to be done by agencies acting together. There is also still not full alignment between SYP and Public Health in the County Council around decisions affecting young people.</p> <p>Again, relationships with schools appear to have been set back somewhat, after the move from a clear 'offer' through the Connexions service to the more complex offer under the current model. Consequently, schools are not as closely engaged with the current providers of SYP as they might be. Furthermore, it has been suggested that this may partly explain why schools have not played a full role in the Surrey troubled families work, even though improved results here would clearly help all the public agencies involved.</p>	<p>Future strategies will need more emphasis on the new outcomes framework and on co-production.</p> <p>Health, particularly PH, could work more closely with SYP, especially in relation to mental health</p> <p>Schools should work more closely with SYP, as well as in other initiatives which have important implications for SYP (e.g. troubled families work)</p>
	Commitment, ownership and responsibility of partners towards the partnership	<p>The feeling of 'ownership' and responsibility of partners varies between the services – for example, there are particularly good partnership relationships with the police. In some cases, however, the relationship is more that of a contract than a genuinely shared partnership. However, we did not find a case where there appeared to be a problem of lack of commitment by any of the partners to the joint strategy.</p> <p>However, the changes have had a downside, too. For example, relationships with schools have partly weakened – SCC moved to giving them a 'traded offer', rather than working out a bespoke solution for their specific needs.</p>	<p>In future, a stronger distinction needs to be drawn between relationships which are essentially meant to be contracts, and those which are meant to be partnerships, based on sharing of ideas, responsibilities, resources and risks.</p> <p>This is now being addressed, in the recognition that schools now have a clearer interest in their pupils' destinations post-school, which will encourage them to work more closely with SYP, particularly with respect to the working on Year 11 transition and on the RONI measure, which was actually developed with schools and which staff feel is still an example of best practice nationally.</p>

Dimension	Principle	Current situation in SYP in Surrey	Steps needed for improvement
Structure and process	Focus on cultural transformation, synergy, efficiencies and outcomes	<p>The new model stressed from the outset (in 2009 and 2010) that there would be an expectation of cultural transformation. This has remained the case throughout the period since the recommissioned services were launched in 2012.</p> <p>A key part of the recommissioning approach was to achieve efficiencies and a great deal of thought was put into how this might be achieved. This has worked out very well indeed, with large efficiency savings being achieved by SYP.</p> <p>The focus on outcomes to date has been confined largely to reducing NEETS. Most councillors and staff in the Council to whom we have talked regard this as the continuing no. 1 priority for SYP.</p>	<p>If the partnerships are to remain vigorous and ambitious, commitment to a new level of transformation needs to be agreed.</p> <p>This was largely achieved by finding appropriate providers to fit each part of the overall model for SYP, service by service and area by area. The potential for synergies by bundling some of these services or areas to give further efficiencies now seems attractive.</p> <p>However, there are some stakeholders within the Council who are now interested in exploring whether SYP might also deliver other outcomes (e.g. in relation to young people's mental health, educational achievement, offending record, physical health, etc.). We had hoped to explore these issues with partners in the NHS and schools but this has not so far been possible. This therefore remains an area for further exploration.</p>
	Sufficient organisational processes and procedures that foster collaboration	<p>The main process for fostering collaboration has been monitoring of achievements through the detailed performance management system. While this has enabled great clarity of purpose and focus on key strategic goals, it has been seen by some providers as imposing the threat, at times, of a mechanistic and 'micro-management' culture. However, most of these fears have slowly receded as it has become clear that performance information has been used as a 'tin-opener' to open up and clarify problems, rather than as secateurs to cut out low performing providers or services.</p> <p>The Quality Mark system has been a valuable process for ensuring quality and guiding the dialogue between commissioners and providers – it has enabled clarity of expectations, while justifying arms-length relationships where quality was clearly being achieved.</p>	<p>However, some strain has been placed on relationships where some of the key processes have not worked – e.g. the data entry application caused real problems for some time (and still is not working in the case of at least one provider). In those relationships which are more 'contracts' than 'partnerships', detailed performance management systems may continue to be appropriate. However, in more genuine partnerships a learning approach based on periodic evaluations may be more important.</p> <p>A similar system to Quality Mark might be considered for a wider range of programmes in SYP.</p>
	Availability of appropriate financial and human resources	<p>Both financial and human resources have generally been available to ensure that the new commissioning model could work as intended.</p> <p>The main area where resource shortage threatened to undermine the model was in relation to the LPF, where providers reported that major inputs were needed over a considerable period of time.</p>	<p>This may be threatened by future funding developments, making it even more important that current resources in partnerships are used as cost-effectively as possible.</p> <p>The consequences of procurement processes for providers, especially for third sector organisations, should be given more consideration in those programmes where their contributions to outcomes are considered especially distinctive.</p>
Relationships	Partnership is participative and empowering	<p>There was a general agreement by partners that over time they had been able to achieve an appropriate level of participation in the partnership decision making processes (although some partners thought this had taken longer than was necessary, due to the Council being over-confident of its own chosen ways forward).</p>	<p>This is a good foundation for the next commissioning round. Where partners are less convinced that this is the case, further discussions of the recommissioning process will be required.</p>
	Culture of collaboration trust and openness	<p>There was a general agreement by partners that there is mutual trust and quite open relationships.</p>	<p>As we did not have access to all current and potential partners in our evaluation, it would be prudent to carry out a wider survey, if only briefly, to identify partnerships where this finding may not apply</p>
	Partnership is continually engaging with others, developing and learning	<p>There was general agreement amongst our interviewees that there was a strong commitment to learning through engaging with partners. This was particularly evident in the way in which performance information was used as way of opening up and exploring issues, rather than attributing blame and seeking to punish those responsible for targets not being met.</p> <p>However, this learning orientation had some limitations. In particular, a number of stakeholders believe that there is not as much information sharing in the system as there should be – particularly given that the performance management system is so detailed (and therefore potentially valuable).</p>	<p>There should now be strong support for the current attempt to widen this approach to bring in the schools and district councillors – since April 2013, local committees which have included District as well as County Councillors, have challenged local schools on their performance – this should be seen as a valuable way of keeping up the level of ambition in learning how to improve the quality of service and quality of outcomes for young people.</p>

Dimension	Principle	Current situation in SYP in Surrey	Steps needed for improvement
Results	Defines success, monitors and reports its performance	The performance management system is very detailed and is more consistent with a traditional, specification-based contract than with a 'partnership' relationship based on shared outcomes. Nevertheless, most partners felt that the way in which performance management is exercised by the Council has helped to keep track of and open up useful discussions on results.	See comments under 'Structure and process' above. In addition, more attention will need to be paid to outcomes in the future, especially where this is an element of 'payment by results' within contracts.
	Clear attribution of benefits, risks and blame	In line with the detailed performance management system, there is clarity of the attribution of benefits and costs in relation to each of the externalised services and of the likely risks.	This should continue in the new commissioning round.

The most important recommendations which emerge from the final column of Figure 4 relate to the need to bring a range of external partners more closely into the commissioning process (and, in some cases, the provision process).

These opportunities apply particularly to the NHS family (plus Public Health, now part of the County Council) and to schools, since both are intimately involved in key aspects of the outcomes experienced by many vulnerable young people. The new outcomes framework should make it easier to identify common ground between SYP and these agencies, and the new logframes are likely to highlight the different ways in which these agencies currently or potentially contribute to the goal and priority outcomes of SYP. Both these sets of partners have major resources at their command, so cost-effective achievement of SYP outcomes is likely to involve leveraging more of these resources in the future. Moreover, SYP needs to balance generalist staff with specialist staff but naturally finds it difficult to have enough specialists – working with a range of partners gives it greater access to more specialised staff when the need arises.

In addition, there may be further valuable opportunities to involve partners in the criminal justice system more deeply in SYP. Indeed, the current cutbacks to community policing resources in Surrey suggest that the police may be more dependent in the future on the kind of access to community contacts and capacity that can be delivered by and through SYP. Given the excellent relationships enjoyed with the police, this area of partnership working may well grow in importance. Although Surrey already has an excellent record in restorative justice, and in identifying and working those most at risk of becoming offenders, the deeper and wider outcomes orientation may open up new avenues for cooperation. Moreover, a new strategy of embedding of co-production could bring major results by making more use of the contributions of peer networks in influencing offending and reoffending rates amongst young people.

The other key area to emerge from the 'Steps needed for improvement' in Figure 4 is the need to distinguish more carefully in the future between those relationships which are more 'contracts' than 'partnerships'. In relationships which are essentially contracts, detailed performance management systems may continue to be appropriate. However, in more genuine partnerships a learning approach based on periodic in-depth evaluations, rather than a continuous monitoring system, may be more important.

This move from continuous monitoring to periodic in-depth evaluation is likely to be especially important in those programmes which are highly innovative, particularly when they are outcome-oriented. Since such programmes cannot, by definition, have a detailed specification, a more light-touch monitoring system is necessary. At the same time, it is essential for a stocktake at key milestones to reassure the commissioner(s) of the validity of the underlying rationale of the service, and its potential contribution to pathways to outcomes.

## 6. AND NEXT ...?

The transformation process for SYP began in 2009 and has produced outstanding results in the two years after its implementation from early 2012. There were some interviewees who cautioned us that this could not be repeated – the best that could be hoped for in the next few years would be consolidation. Others even wondered if the results achieved to date were sustainable, given that further budget cuts may well be in the offing.

However, the staff, managers and elected members involved in SYP have proven how much improvement can be achieved by a systematic approach, clearly focused on priority outcomes, engaging with young people as co-producers of those outcomes, and working in partnership with other commissioners and with providers.

In this report we have demonstrated the major achievements made to date. However, we have also highlighted ways in which the distinctive elements of the Surrey SYP approach could be taken considerably further. We believe that the transformation process is therefore far from over. Given that organisations which already have achieved major change are often particularly well placed to keep the momentum going, this may only be the beginning ...

# *Part Four*

## LITERATURE

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## LITERATURE

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Apart from the documentation provided by Surrey County Council the following literature was used in this report:

**Ben Byrne and Kathryn Brooks (2014)**

*Post-YOT Youth Justice*. London: Howard League for Penal Reform.

**Governance International (2014)**

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