

Uth THE YOUTH ASSOCIATION

**YOUTH WORK WORTH CHAMPIONING
OUR PRINCIPLES**

CHAMPIONING
GOOD YOUTH WORK
SINCE 1904



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Why we believe in Youth Work



TYA believes whole-heartedly in the power and value of good youth work; that's what we have been championing since our creation in 1904. With over 100 years' experience to draw on, we want to be clear about what we believe good youth work is and what it means to us.

Good youth work...

...creates positive changes in the lives of children and young people. It is a constructive process that aims to give children and young people chances to be happier people living more fulfilling lives. It is not about the negative processes of controlling children and young people or 'diverting' them from one activity to another. While good youth work may have the effect of reducing harmful social factors such as crime, it is not its driving purpose. Such effects are the products of young people making more constructive and positive life choices with the support of good youth workers.

Good youth work...

...is about advocacy for and on behalf of children and young people. Good youth workers will never stop reminding the rest of the adult community that children and young people can

Good youth work...

...is centred on the needs of children and young people and on encouraging them to identify and express those needs. This means that children and young people set the agenda for good youth workers. This does not mean that a government agenda to promote learning, achievement and employment for young people has no part to play in good youth work. These

Good youth work...

...can only happen when children and young people take part in the process voluntarily. A key source of the power of good youth work is that at its heart is a voluntary 'deal' between children and young people, their youth workers and the agencies

Good youth work...

...aims to enable children and young people to understand the links between the rights and responsibilities of citizens in society. Children and young people have the right to participate in the design and organisation of services and institutions that effect and shape their lives. They also have the responsibility to do so consistently and conscientiously. Good youth workers are there to help this process and ensure that it has maximum impact.

One of the foundations of good youth work is its concentration on how children and young people form and maintain good

relationships; both with each other and with adults. Good youth workers will look to create model relationships with children and young people and to help children and young people to learn relationship-building skills. Such relationships are never unconditional. They rest on an understanding that all positive relationships are dependent on everyone involved respecting their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others.

provide the potential solutions to social ills. They may be the victims of society's problems, but cannot be held responsible for underlying causes such as poverty, inequality and prejudice.

are exactly the needs that many young people express. That said, children and young people as individuals and groups will always have their own specific needs that do not necessarily fit with government policy or agenda; these needs are just as important and worthy of the time and resources of good youth workers.

supporting and funding the work. Each voluntary partner in this 'deal' has the right to walk away if the youth work process is not serving their needs, and therefore mutual respect and benefit can grow.

It follows then, that good youth work can be of benefit to all children and young people, whatever the starting position of their life journey. It must not be confined to tackling disadvantage or working solely with disadvantaged children and young people. Good youth work will, however, always recognise that some children and young people have disadvantaged starting points forced on them by adult society.

Good youth work...

...supports families and helps children and young people to maintain positive family relationships. Over time, good youth work will help children and young people to deal with the processes of developing independence as young adults and to han-

Good youth work...

...is primarily a social and group process that is rooted in communities; either local neighbourhood communities or communities of shared interests. Good youth workers should always keep youth work accessible to all children and young people by

Good youth work...

... 'Detached' or 'street based' youth work can be a very powerful tool for positive change in the lives of some young people. It should never be seen as an instrument of social con-

Good youth work...

possess a wide range of skills, attitudes and approaches to their work. Taken together, these skills and processes form the 'craft' of good youth work. We believe the value of those who are youth work experts should be recognised and rewarded. We also believe that many people provide excellent youth work in their own time and have no wish to be paid or make youth work their profession. They are to be praised, encouraged and helped to learn the craft of good youth work.

Measuring the performance and outcomes of work with children and young people is an essential part of good youth work. Be-

Good youth work...

...is a powerful force for positive social change and good youth workers, alongside the children and young people they support, are its best and most credible advocates.

dle the necessary changes in family relationships as they grow to adulthood. This is why good youth workers should never be afraid to work with parents and carers if that is what children and young people want and need.

delivering youth work as close as possible to where communities need it delivered. Good youth workers always expect to have to go to children and young people, rather than expecting children and young people to come to them.

trol. Children and young people have the right to share public spaces responsibly.

ing able to show the value that good youth work adds to society and the positive distance that children and young people can travel when they have help and support of good youth workers is crucial. Youth workers need to feel proud of the value they create and know how to improve their performance continually. Children and young people have the right to see how far they have improved their lives and be encouraged by the example of their peers. We all have a responsibility to explain why good youth work is so important to children, young people and the communities in which they live.



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