

Prime Minister⁽¹¹⁾

The Home Secretary is now ready to respond to the report of the Review Group on the Youth Service.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I have highlighted the main points in the draft statement at A.

Content, subject to colleagues?

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw PC CH MC
Lord President of the Council
68 Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2AT

DWB
19/4

Do we have to have
yet another
advisory body. This
form is adequate
checking them although
some way in
to end them.
will become permanent
group. I
am against it. Not

18 April 1984

Dear Willie,

FINAL REPORT OF THE REVIEW GROUP ON THE YOUTH SERVICE

In my letter of 27 August 1982 about the report of the Review Group on the Youth Service (RGYS), subsequently published as Cmdnd 8686, I said that I would be consulting colleagues later about a comprehensive Government response to the report. I am grateful to colleagues for their initial reactions. Since then we have had discussions in H and in further correspondence with particular reference to legislation, and decisions on two uncontroversial recommendations were announced in December 1982. Public consultation on the report ended on 31 March last year. However, one of the recommendations earlier accepted related to a review of a youth service body - the National Youth Bureau - and we wished to take account of the September 1983 report of that review in reaching decisions on further RGYS recommendations.

I am writing now to inform colleagues about the results of the consultation on the RGYS report, and to seek their comments on the attached draft statement containing my proposed response to the report.

We have received more than 300 sets of comments on the report - many through Members of Parliament (the overwhelming majority of whom are on our side of the House). Many of the comments originate from the voluntary sector, but we have also heard from the local authority associations with educational interests (ACC and AMA), and other significant organisations outside the youth service field itself including the CBI and the TUC. Overall, there was considerable support for the RGYS report as a perceptive analysis leading to realistic recommendations, although there were those who had hoped for much more radical recommendations, particularly on resources (on which the report was responsibly agnostic). There were varying degrees of support

for all the individual recommendations in the report, and there was little opposition to any of them.

Virtually all the comments, including those of both the local authority associations, were strongly in favour of legislation on RGYS lines. In view of the strength of support for this recommendation, which the Review Group itself regarded as central to its report, it will not now be easy to turn it down out of hand (as was earlier suggested in correspondence). Moreover the fact that we have recently decided against taking any action in the foreseeable future regarding the associated question of the law of further education, (and have just announced this in Parliament) means that the option of holding out realistic prospects for legislation on the youth service in that context is no longer one we can legitimately adopt. In the circumstances, therefore, I propose to respond to the recommendation for legislation by the issue, following consultation, of a circular of guidance to the youth service field. This document (Annex A), which was earlier circulated among officials of interested departments, will place emphasis on two major concerns. It will firstly set out very clearly the public expenditure background and lead on to stress the importance of securing the most effective use of available resources through improved efficiency and coherence in the planning of activities. This is very much in line with the approach we are encouraging in other ways, not least through our financial management initiative. It is also fully in line with the Review Group's report. Secondly, since voluntary organisations are the main source of youth service provision, the circular will make clear the importance we attach, as a Government, to the role of the voluntary sector and the need for the best possible level of co-operation between that sector and local authority provision.

As far as structures at the national level are concerned, a Government decision against the recommendation for a Minister in this Department to be nominated as responsible for co-ordinating Government policies on youth matters, was announced by the Prime Minister in July 1983. As indicated in my letter of 27 August, I therefore propose to continue with the present arrangements within my own Department, but to give them rather greater public prominence, in particular by designating my present youth service officials as a publicly identifiable unit dealing with youth service matters. This would be little more than a presentational change.

The other main recommendation to which high priority is attached by the youth world is that relating to the proposed establishment of a national body to advise on issues in the field of youth affairs. While I am unconvinced that there is a role for a body with a remit so wide ranging as that proposed by the Review Group, there would be value in a small group which brought together the voluntary side partners as equals with LEA representatives. Such a group could offer advice on such important questions as the needs of young people that the youth service is best fitted to meet and could identify priorities among these (including on the most effective deployment of available youth service resources to meet such needs). This could be seen, in some ways, as a continuation and development of the task tackled

by the Review Group itself (which was highly regarded in the field). A remit on the lines I have indicated would, in my view, be sufficiently tightly drawn to ensure that such an advisory body's activities were sensibly focused. While it would not preclude consideration of the role of the youth service in relation to wider issues affecting young people, it would not be the role of this body to advocate policy in such areas except in so far as it might bear on the youth service itself.

Even on this basis, however, I think we shall need to keep the progress of the body under careful review and it would be my intention to establish it in the first instance for an experimental period of three years - after which both its performance and its remit would be reviewed. Servicing arrangements during this period would be by my Department with assessors, as and when appropriate, from other Departments. While DES Ministers will obviously take an interest in the activities of the body, including considering carefully the advice received, we would see it as essentially for the youth world to secure its success or otherwise. As a further reflection of this, I propose that this body should report not only to me but also, as appropriate, directly to local authorities and voluntary organisations within the youth service field. In addition, I expect that Nicholas Edwards will wish to consider the question of whether the body should advise on matters in Wales and report also to him.

The other matters covered in the draft statement as it now stands are of purely domestic concern within my own Department. However, there are some RGYS recommendations in which colleagues will also have an interest, for example regarding the needs of ethnic communities and those of the young unemployed. Consultation has elicited some response on these, and those comments which have been received are generally of a supportive nature. If colleagues consider that other matters should receive specific mention in the statement, they will no doubt let me know.

We are now committed to indicating our response to the outstanding recommendations in this report by, or soon after, Easter. Before that we shall wish to bring the local authority associations informally into the way our thinking has developed. I would accordingly be grateful for colleagues' early assent to the course I now propose. Only if issues of substance arise from the discussions with local authority associations I have described will I feel the need to raise these matters again in advance of a formal announcement.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong. I would appreciate replies within 2 weeks.

Emmerson

Kevin



10 DOWNING STREET

c. CO
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DHSS
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From the Private Secretary

25 April 1984

Final Report of the Review Group
on the Youth Service

The Prime Minister has seen a copy of your Secretary of State's letter of 18 April, with which he enclosed a draft statement on the Report of the Review Group on the Youth Service.

The Prime Minister has questioned the need to establish a new advisory body, even on an experimental basis. She feels not only that this would be contrary to the Government's general policy on non-departmental public bodies, but also that the advisory body could well become a troublesome pressure group.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the recipients of your Secretary of State's letter.

(David Barclay)

Miss C.E. Hodkinson,
Department of Education and Science.

DRAFT STATEMENT ON REPORT OF THE REVIEW GROUP ON THE YOUTH SERVICE

[INSPIRED PQ] : To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to announce further decisions on the recommendations in the report of the Review Group on the Youth Service (Cmnd 8686); and if he will make a statement.

MR PETER BROOKE

My rt hon Friend has given careful consideration to the report's recommendations directed to central Government in the light of comments received during consultation, and is now able to announce further decisions.

① He accepts the Review Group's recommendation that it would be helpful to the field for there to be a publicly known unit in his Department dealing with youth service matters, and proposes to identify such a unit.

② In line with the Review Group's recommendations, grant-aid is being made available for experimental projects in managerial innovation in the youth service and for the training of part-time and volunteer staff in particular; the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services will be consulted about the allocation of these resources.

③ As far as the Review Group's recommendations for grant-aid for regional and county voluntary organisations is concerned, the Department already grant-aids national voluntary youth organisations and my rt hon Friend considers that it is primarily for these national organisations to support their regional and county bodies, as a number do now. On financial grounds, it has not been possible to accept the Review Group's recommendation for mandatory grants for students on youth work courses.

④ My rt hon Friend has considered with great care the Review Group's recommendations on legislation, but does not consider that it would be appropriate to introduce new legislation relating to the youth service unless he were proposing legislation dealing with the whole statutory framework of post-school education. This is not the case: as he told the House on 9 April he takes the view that existing legislation for post-school education remains broadly adequate for its purpose. He further considers that existing legislation provides a similarly adequate basis for youth service provision. He does, however, recognise the need for additional guidance to the youth service particularly as regards the important areas of co-operation

between the voluntary and local authority sectors and the need for effective management of available resources. He will consequently issue for consultation, very shortly, the draft of a circular setting out the Government's views.

Finally, my rt. hon. Friend has also given careful consideration to the recommendation for a national body to offer advice on questions arising in the field of youth affairs. He has noted, particularly, the considerable support expressed in consultation for this recommendation and the views subsequently expressed in the report of the review of the National Youth Bureau. In view of the range of activities currently undertaken by the youth service, he is persuaded that a role exists for a small advisory body capable of offering informed advice to him [to the Secretary of State for Wales,] and to others with youth service responsibilities on the appropriate scale and direction of youth service activity - having regard to the available resources. !!!

He accordingly proposes to establish such a body within the next few months for an experimental period of 3 years in the first instance, subject to review at the end of that period. Individual members will be appointed by him to this body in a personal capacity: in making his choices for membership, he will have regard to the broad range of interests in the youth service field and to advice he may receive on membership from those active within it.

DRAFT CIRCULAR TO ALL LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL VOLUNTARY YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

YOUTH SERVICE

Introduction

1. The Report of the Review Group on the Youth Service in England - "Experience and Participation" (Cmnd 8686) - was published in October 1982. Ministers have already announced decisions on certain recommendations in the report concerning central Government: references to these appear in paragraphs 6 and 11 of this Circular.
2. Many of the recommendations in the Review Group's report were however addressed to those at local level concerned with the provision and co-ordination of services for young people and the training of those involved in providing such services. This Circular is concerned with these recommendations, and takes account of the many comments received on the Report during the consultation period, including those from local authorities and from voluntary organisations.

Resources

3. The Secretary of State considers it essential to stress the public expenditure environment within which the content of this Circular is set. Restraint on public expenditure in the interests of the country's overall well-being will continue. It is creditable that, within the limitations already required of local authorities, so many have been able to support so well the statutory youth service. It is also worthy of note and recognition how generously, at a time of widespread economic difficulty, financial help from individuals and others for the voluntary part of the youth service has been maintained; such help will be at least as necessary in the future. Local authorities, for their part, will have to appraise carefully their funding of the statutory youth service relative to other claims on their total expenditure; the general expectation must be against increases in what they can afford.

Planning, co-ordination and management

4. The Secretary of State considers however that these resource considerations reinforce rather than impede the need to consider the implementation of certain aspects of the Review Group's report. In particular, a major emphasis was placed in the report on securing the most effective use of the considerable resources already devoted by

local education authorities, and particularly by voluntary organisations, to the youth service. A number of the Review Group's recommendations are relevant to this.

5. The Secretary of State therefore wishes to draw attention to the need to ensure sound arrangements for the planning, co-ordination and management of the youth service, in order to secure the best return for young people from existing resources. Voluntary organisations are the main providers and the value of their distinctive and varied contribution is greatly appreciated by the Government. Arrangements for the future must reinforce the partnership between the voluntary and statutory sectors, so that the potential of the resources available is fully realised.

6. The Secretary of State is himself initiating certain steps to improve the planning, co-ordination and management of services and resources. He accepts that a national advisory council should be appointed and will be considering the arrangements to give effect to this. He also accepts the Review Group's recommendation that a youth unit be established in the Department of Education and Science and a review has been undertaken of the National Youth Bureau to enable it to carry out more effectively the tasks of collecting and analysing data and of spreading information about good practice and innovation. The Department is making grant aid available to voluntary organisations for short term experimental projects in managerial innovation in the youth service.

7. At the local level, circumstances vary greatly between one authority and another, and it would not be appropriate to prescribe standard machinery for consultation and co-ordination between the providers in the local authorities and the voluntary organisations. However, the Secretary of State would wish to endorse certain principles formulated by the Review Group to promote the efficient and sensitive delivery of the Service. In particular, he would support the need for effective arrangements to avoid the unnecessary duplication by local authorities of youth service activities which voluntary agencies are able and willing to undertake. This in turn points to the need within the local authority for a clear focus for youth service matters. This should involve arrangements to ensure effective consultation and a continuing dialogue with voluntary organisations, so that needs can be assessed; the provision of facilities considered; and the full benefits of the youth service partnership achieved. Advisory arrangements to achieve these objectives, where they accord with local wishes, can be set up within the existing statutory machinery.

Participation by young people

8. The Secretary of State believes that a service which is concerned with the personal

development of young people must seek to encourage their involvement in decision taking, and in accepting the implications of those decisions, to the greatest extent which is consonant with the stage of development of those concerned. Such involvement is likely to be most clearly seen to be effective, and therefore most satisfying to those involved, at the level of the club, unit and individual organisation, and the Secretary of State hopes that this will be appropriately encouraged.

Special needs

9. The Secretary of State recognises that local authorities are already well aware - from their own direct knowledge of local circumstances - of the important needs of groups such as those young people who suffer from mental and physical handicap; those at risk; and those from ethnic minorities. He is confident that these needs will be taken fully into account by local authorities and voluntary organisations in considering their priorities. Within the expenditure constraints described in paragraph 3 above, however, the Secretary of State would wish to draw particular attention to the needs of the young unemployed, when local authorities and voluntary organisations are considering the deployment of available resources. In so doing, he recognises that this will entail relatively fewer resources for other groups and that difficult decisions may well be needed. Attention is drawn also to Circular 6/82 which includes reference to the contribution of the youth service to the Youth Training Scheme.

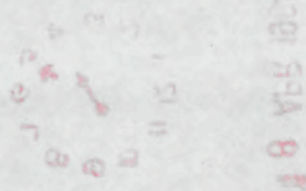
10. So far as the Government's own grants to national voluntary youth organisations are concerned, it accepts in general the priorities set out by the Review Group. These are now among the factors taken into account by Government in assessing such grants.

Training

11. In the light of the Review Group's report the Government has decided to make funds available for two new initiatives concerned with training. First, the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work was established in December 1982, to undertake the professional endorsement of initial and further training courses for full-time personnel in youth and community work and to foster appropriate new developments. The Secretary of State hopes that all concerned will co-operate with this Council, with a view to improving the training available for those intending to enter youth and community work as well as those who are already in the profession. Second, grant-aid has been made available to voluntary organisations for the training of part-time and volunteer staff. Such support will be available on a pump-priming basis and the Secretary of State hopes that these organisations will increasingly be prepared, as many are now, to accept responsibility for a continuing commitment.

Conclusion

12. The Secretary of State believes that attention to planning and management, on a joint basis and between local authorities and voluntary organisations, will lead to a stronger and more co-ordinated Youth Service. This can only be to the greater benefit of young people, to whose needs the service has already made such a valuable contribution. To this end he plans, from time to time, to establish with authorities the arrangements they may have for securing effective co-ordination of planning and management with voluntary youth organisations in their areas.



8 APR 1984





Duty Clerk

As requested
of [Signature]

18.4.54

With the Private Secretary's Compliments

DES to LPC Final report 18/4 -
went in box - has not yet reappeared back
in CF tho' marked back in box

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Elizabeth House
York Road
London SE1 7PH

Telephone 01-928 9222



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON SW1H 9AT

27 August 1982

Dear Willie.

FINAL REPORT OF THE REVIEW GROUP ON THE YOUTH SERVICE

In January 1981 my predecessor set up a Review Group on the Youth Service (RGYS) under the chairmanship of Mr Alan Thompson, a former Deputy Secretary in this Department. The Group has ... recently submitted its report to me, and I enclose a copy. This letter seeks your and colleagues' agreement to its publication, and to my proposals for response to two of its recommendations which require our joint consideration.

The report is a timely and carefully considered assessment of the way in which the Youth Service is coping with the current needs of young people. I find its recommendations generally realistic and moderate, to the extent that they may well come as a disappointment to the field, which has high hopes of a radical document. Broadly, they are aimed at consolidating and promoting good practice and they emphasise, in particular, the need for related services locally to co-ordinate their provision in order to make the most efficient use of existing resources and to work together in combating, for example, juvenile crime and racism, and in helping young people to cope with such difficulties as unemployment and life in the inner city. Colleagues will wish to consider how to respond to the various RGYS recommendations which concern them individually, on such matters as the relationship between the youth service and the police, the probation services, the social services, the employment agencies, and local authority services generally, so that in due course we can present a comprehensive Government response to the report. I will be consulting further about this and, in the light of public reactions to the report over the next few months, we will also need to consider how far the Government should formulate and publicise its views on the great bulk of the RGYS recommendations which are directed not so much at itself as at the youth service in general and at the providing local authorities.

Meanwhile, I am sure that we have no reason to hesitate about publishing the report, and indeed that it would be in the Government's interests to do so swiftly. As far as the means of publication is concerned, I suggest that it should be as a Command paper. The Review Group was set up in accordance with a Government undertaking in response to a Private Member's Motion on the problems of youth in contemporary society tabled by Trevor Skeet (Cons, Bedford) in July 1980, immediately following the defeat of his Private Member's Bill which aimed to provide a new legislative basis for the youth service. Given the background of considerable Parliamentary support for Trevor Skeet's initiatives, and as a courtesy to the All-Party Parliamentary Youth Affairs Lobby, I therefore propose to publish the report as a Command paper when Parliament reassembles in October.

Turning to the two RGYS recommendations which require our joint consideration, I do not intend to accept the suggestion in paras 8.4 - 8.8 that a Minister in this Department should be nominated as responsible for co-ordinating Government policies on youth matters. It seems both unnecessary and impracticable. The present arrangement under which a Minister in this Department - currently William Shelton - is responsible for the youth service and works closely with other Ministers as appropriate seems quite adequate, though there may be too little public awareness of the role which this Department plays in sponsoring the youth service, and I shall be considering within the Department what needs to be done to make our role more widely known.

I find myself in a dilemma about the RGYS recommendations for legislation to clarify the objectives of the youth service and to put the powers and duties of local authorities to provide a youth service on to a sound statutory basis, as set out in chapter 11 of the report. Colleagues will need no reminding of our concern when we were discussing proposals for reforming the law on further education (including the possibility of some provision for the youth service) this spring that any such legislation would inevitably increase pressure on local authorities to spend more.

On the other hand, I am sure that we would be in an indefensible and indeed potentially worse position if we were to reject the RGYS recommendations on legislation. For one thing, we would be widely seen as reneging on Neil Macfarlane's commitment to Trevor Skeet when the Group was set up that its remit would include an assessment of the need for legislation during the lifetime of this Parliament. We would be unable to claim with any conviction that the RGYS recommendations were unacceptable in themselves, not least because they eschew the radical and prescriptive approach of Trevor Skeet's Youth and Community Bill, and implicitly espouse the alternative approach of the Government's own amendment to that Bill in 1980. For another, I believe that it would do a serious disservice to our relationship with such advisory bodies as the RGYS if we were to reject out of hand this modest and well argued proposal for legislation which they regard as the touchstone of their exceptionally responsible report. We must bear in mind that the members of the Group are influential people in the field

whose reputations are at stake on this issue above all others in the report. Rejection of this recommendation would be seen as a serious snub to them, in that it would be tantamount to rejection of the report as a whole.

We must also not overlook the real probability that if we ourselves do not promote legislation of a relatively innocuous character, others will come up with considerably more radical proposals. Moreover, the history of initiatives on youth service legislation over the last decade - of which Trevor Skeet's Bill was but the most recent - indicates that such initiatives are very likely to come from our own side of the House. It is no doubt largely due to the existence of the Review Group that we have been spared any further attempts over the past two years but, now that it has reported, we can expect the pressure to be renewed and this time we would not be able to fall back on the establishment of a Review Group to relieve that pressure. As will become public knowledge at the time of the Queen's Speech, there is of course no longer any prospect of Government legislation on the youth service, and this in itself will generate pressure. However, we could still gain considerable political credit by offering an acceptable youth service measure on RGYS lines to an MP who is successful in the ballot for Private Member's Bills. In so doing, we would pre-empt the politically embarrassing need to oppose a prescriptive measure with real public expenditure implications introduced independently as a Private Member's Bill, and at the same time provide a measure which would put the youth service on the sensible and firm statutory basis which it lacks at present.

Of course I accept that a Private Member's Bill, sponsored by us, would inevitably attract amendments which we could not accept. However, it would be politically easier for us to reject these than to reject an independent bill in its entirety or to introduce amendments which might be regarded as wrecking, as was the case with Trevor Skeet's bill.

I am copying this letter to other members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong and hope that you and other colleagues will be able to agree at least on publication, and possibly also on legislation, without the need for discussion.

Emery,

Kerr