

MORAY YOUTHSTART

Threatened Youthstart Projects and the Impact of Their Loss

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**Solution —
— Management**



Moray Youthstart

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Section 1 – Overview of Projects / Activities Under Threat

Introduction and Overview

The Moray Regeneration Outcome Agreement (MROA) was a 3 year project that started in April 2005; however, it was never assumed that the need to support disadvantaged young people would cease after March 2008. Regular reports and evaluations suggested projects that could be mainstreamed, ended or needed to continue and this evolution was managed throughout the life of the MROA. Efforts were made to find alternative funding for those projects warranting continuance but these efforts were influenced by changes to strategic objectives imposed on local authorities by the Scottish Government and changes to the associated funding arrangements. This is not to malign the changes but to explain why timely alternative arrangements could not be put in place for all aspects of Youthstart's work.

Government policy changes were not the only issue; a Big Lottery bid covering several aspects of Youthstart's work was deemed too wide in scope and too large in monetary terms for one small LA area and had to be revised, reduced and resubmitted. The outcome of the resubmission is not expected until later this year. This has meant the Partnership has not been able to secure the funds for all the activities deemed necessary to support disadvantaged young people. The uncertainty has led to added pressure on projects that are still trying to secure the additional funding needed to continue and develop their activities.

The projects and activities that are currently under threat include:

- Moray New Futures
- Moray Youth Action Transition Post
- Mobile Information Bus
- Information and Network Support Officer
- Youthstart Partnership Manager

In the remaining part of Section 1, we briefly describe the services these projects/activities provide, who they provide them to, the annual cost and the likely impact if they are not continued or replaced with an effective equivalent programme. In Section 2 we indicate which of the National and local outcomes will be affected by the projects. In Section 3 we describe each service in more detail, the benefits achieved and comments on the services from professionals and clients.

Moray New Futures

The aim of Moray New Futures is to help unemployed people, excluded by a wide range of issues, get ready for work.

Providing	To	Cost	Comments
Support to overcome barriers to employability by: • Building self-confidence • Develop life skills training • Raising self-esteem	Unemployed people aged 16 and over	£25k	Started 2000. 'Barriers' include: • Offending behaviour • Mental health problems • Drug and alcohol issues Where the client needs long-

Providing	To	Cost	Comments
- Improving communication - Making positive changes in life style			term individual support.

Impact

The National Outcomes and local Moray outcomes that would be adversely affected by the withdrawal of the Moray New Futures are shown in Section 2. Other impacts include:

- It would be very, very difficult for those who had been addicted to drugs to get back to a drug free life.
- Fewer former drug addicts would be able to gain employment.
- Fewer people with alcohol problems would be able to gain employment and sustain family relationships.
- Fewer ex-offenders would gain employment.
- Potentially there are a number of consequential impacts if people are not returned to work including, higher levels of crime, higher workloads for Police and justice departments, greater tensions within communities, family problems, more poor health problems for the NHS to resolve. Furthermore, problems affecting clients not in work or being supported are likely to be ongoing; therefore, there would be additional pressure on the above services due to people repeat offending or returning time and time again for treatment.

Moray Youth Action (Transition Post)

The aim of Moray Youth Action is to help young people acquire the skills needed for transition between education and employment, further education or training.

Providing	To	Cost	Comments
Basic skills that reduce the possibility of a person becoming homeless and assist the transition between education and employment.	Vulnerable and disadvantaged young people from age 16 to 24.	£52k	Managed by the Aberlour Child Care Trust. Clients not necessarily offenders or in to drugs or alcohol.

Impact

The National Outcomes and local Moray outcomes that would be adversely affected by the withdrawal of the Moray Youth Action Transition Post are shown in Section 2. Other impacts include:

- Service to 16-24 year olds would have to cease. MYA would try and place existing clients with other organisations but in some cases this is also dependent on these bodies obtaining more funding.
- There would be a lack of continuity in support as clients move programmes. Building trust takes time and to move clients on at a very vulnerable time would mean some might take the wrong path.
- Young people, especially those lacking the skills or knowledge to help themselves, would find it more difficult to get accommodation, employment, training or further education. In turn, this could lead to more problems for

the Police, local communities, Social Work, Housing and other Council services.

- There is likely to be a rise in the number of young people unable to make a successful transition from education and hence falling into the More Choices, More Chances category. Unemployment at this stage in life has proven to have profound effect on people in later life with longer periods of worklessness and the development of barriers such as mental health, substance misuse, and offending behaviour. (More Choices, More Chance Strategy)

Mobile Information Bus

The purpose of the Mobile Information Bus is to encourage young people in rural areas to access information which will support them in making positive lifestyle choices.

Providing	To	Cost	Comments
Health and lifestyle advice and information on: • Drugs • Alcohol • Sexual health & HIV • Bullying • Healthy eating	Young people of secondary school age.	£45k ¹ (50% funded by NHS)	Run by NHS Grampian. Started April 2000. Visited by >15,000 young people.

Impact

The National Outcomes and local Moray outcomes that would be adversely affected by the withdrawal of the Mobile Information Bus are shown in Section 2. Other impacts include:

- The strong partnership links and synergy between sport and healthy lifestyles would be lost without the MIB support to Community Street Football.
- A rise in problems relating to drugs, alcohol, smoking, sexual health, mental health, eating disorders and relationships can be expected.
- An important and valued contribution to Operation Avon, led by Grampian Police, would be lost.
- Targeted interventions (listed in Section 3) across Moray could not be supported with the same degree of flexibility as is possible with a mobile bus.
- Community Beat Officers would be very disappointed if this deserving service was not supported.

Information and Network Support Officer

The aim of the Information and Networking Support Officer (INSO) is to ensure public and voluntary service practitioners have fast and easy access to intellectual resources which can bring added value to their own work.

Providing	To	Cost	Comments
• Electronic newsletter	Public and voluntary	£36k +	Some information such as the

¹ Actual funding from last year included; £6500 from the Community Safety Partnership, £15k from the Children's Change Fund and £19k core NHS funding (who also provided a top-up for maintenance).

Providing	To	Cost	Comments
• Advice & information • Contact database • Resource library • Research • Events & conferences • Small projects • Training	service practitioners that have an interest in disadvantaged young people.	accn	contact database, resource library and calendar of events is provided through the website www.youthstart.org

Impact

The National Outcomes and local Moray outcomes that would be adversely affected by the withdrawal of the INSO are shown in Section 2. Other impacts include:

- Networking events would reduce in number, possibly to zero, resulting in partners having a poorer understanding of other people and organisations working in the sector and hence increasing the likelihood that clients receive less than the optimum solution available.
- Training events would reduce in number, possibly to zero, resulting in partners being less well trained and hence operating less effectively.
- Information flow would be reduced.
- Partners would have to spend more time on research and information seeking activities to the detriment of the time spent with clients.
- The Partnership overall would be less efficient and effective.
- The capacity of the partners and partnership to engage with and meet the needs of disadvantaged young adults will decline.
- Youthstart web site would not be maintained and would be lost as a potentially very useful resource.

Youthstart Partnership Manager

The aim of the Partnership Manager is to provide dedicated support to the members of the Youthstart Partnership and a focal point for their activities.

Providing/Facilitating	To	Cost	Comments
• Funding applications • Administering budgets • Budget control • Reports • Strategic inputs • Impartial advice • Meetings • Members to deliver their commitments • Inter-agency working	The 29 members of the Youthstart Partnership and in particular to the Youthstart Implementation Group.	£34k + accn	Cost shown is for a 4-day per week position but a part-time post is feasible if it can be aligned to a complimentary post funded and tasked from an alternative source.

Impact

The National Outcomes and local Moray outcomes that would be adversely affected by the withdrawal of the Youthstart Partnership Manager are shown in Section 2. Other impacts include:

- There would be an increased burden on statutory services;

- Community Planning would potentially have difficulty in delivering the Local Authority's strategies².
- The Partnership Manager provides a readily identifiable focal point for Community Planning to engage with. Without the post this task will be significantly more difficult as Community Planning will not be able to readily identify which of the 29 members in the Partnership has the current responsibility for the particular aspect they wish to address. The likely consequence is that Community Planning will not receive timely, researched and accurate input into proposals that affect young people.
- The loss of a best practice role model for bringing together numerous independent groups from different backgrounds. Complex partnership working is expected to feature more and more as the public sector strives for more effective and cost efficient services.
- The partners are unlikely to retain their focus on key outcomes without a Manager who can guide them, advise them, chase them and facilitate interagency activity.

Other Impacts

These projects and activities have become an integral part of multi-agency package that support people with multiple problems. Removing or reducing any element weakens the hard-won collaboration and reduces the effectiveness of the support to young people. Youthstart has been influential in building, maintaining and developing the relationships between partners and to have to re-forge these relationships under a different umbrella would be a waste of time and resources for no perceived benefits.

Whilst the above focuses on the impacts for clients, there is one important and significant impact across all programmes; the impact on staff. Disjointed and uncertain funding has a significant negative impact on the people who deliver services and hence the operation and effectiveness of an organisation. Poor morale arising from job uncertainty filters through to clients and encourages workers to jump ship before a contract expires, with the consequent loss of continuity that is so important to the client. *"The high turnover of staff has been problematic; it takes time to get the trust of young people."*

² Summary Paper presented to the ChYPP on 24 Jan 07.

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Section 2 – National and Local Outcomes in Relation to Threatened Projects

The table shows the National and Local Outcomes that need to be met and which projects contribute to satisfying those outcomes. It follows that if the projects are not supported then the outcomes may not be met or alternative projects will need to be initiated to satisfy the outcomes to the target levels that have been set. Note, only outcomes relevant to these projects have been included.

The Youthstart Partnership Manager and Information & Networking Support Officer contribute to all the projects that deliver services to disadvantaged young people through the management and information they provide. Hence, funding these posts contributes to all the outcomes.

We noted during compilation of this table that not all successful outcomes from these projects may be reflected in the relevant indicators, source or project sections of the MCCP SOA. This does not detract from the value of the project but may be a missed opportunity for the Local Authority in terms of claiming successes when reporting progress to the Scottish Government. For example, Moray Youth Action (and, to a different extent, Moray New Futures) contribute to 8.1 'Improving the life chances of looked after children'. In doing so some of their clients may gain a Maths and English qualification at SCQF Level 3 or above or enter further education, employment or training. However, the source of relevant indicators (Scottish Government Statistics Destination of School Leavers and Children Looked After statistics) may not include the achievements of MYA or MNF.

#	National Outcome	Local Outcome	MNF	MYA	MIB	INSO	Manage
2	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.		X	X		X	X
2.1		The numbers of young people employed in Moray who have access to career development opportunities will increase.		X		X	X
2.2		We will make full potential of those not yet in the labour market.	X	X		X	X
2.3.1		Young people into Employment Project - Increase opportunities for employment of vulnerable people.	X	X		X	X
2.3.2		Young people into Employment Project - Establish early intervention strategy for young people who could become or are 'not in education, training or employment' category.	X	X		X	X
3	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for research and innovation.		X	X		X	X
3.1		The number of opportunities for people to become more	X	X		X	X

#	National Outcome	Local Outcome	MNF	MYA	MIB	INSO	Manage
		educated, skilled and successful will increase.					
4	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.		X	X	X	X	X
4.1		Children and young people as active members of the community will increase.	X	X		X	X
4.2.1		Curriculum for Excellence Project - Continue to address underachievement at credit level and in S5/S6.		X		X	X
4.2.2		Curriculum for Excellence Project - Continue to address issues of underachievement in the lowest attaining 20%.		X		X	X
4.2.3		Curriculum for Excellence Project - Promote health, well being and respect.		X	X	X	X
5	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.					X	X
5.1		The risk of exclusion will be reduced by caring for and supporting children.		X		X	X
6	We live longer, healthier lives.		X	X	X	X	X
6.1		Reduce the burden of disease, harm, distress and premature death due to excessive alcohol consumption and drug misuse.	X		X	X	X
6.2		Continue to improve the health of people and sustain long term change by preventing or reducing health inequalities.	X		X	X	X
6.3		People in Moray have improved mental well-being.	X		X	X	X
6.4		Increase the proportion of people needing care or support who are able to sustain an independent quality of life as part of the community.	X	X		X	X
7	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.		X	X	X	X	X
7.1		There will be a reduction in the levels of deprivation in our communities.	X			X	X
7.2		The number of people with literacy and numeracy difficulties will be reduced.	X			X	X
7.3		Our community will be inclusive and tolerant	X	X	X	X	X

#	National Outcome	Local Outcome	MNF	MYA	MIB	INSO	Manage
8	We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.		X	X	X	X	X
8.1		Children will be protected from abuse and harm		X		X	X
8.2		The life chances of looked after children will improve.	X			X	X
9	We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger		X	X	X	X	X
9.1		The number of children and young people who offend will reduce.	X	X		X	X
10	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.		X	X	X	X	X
10.1		Increase the number of people assessed as homeless who are provided with appropriate accommodation.	X	X		X	X
10.2		Access to services will improve.	X	X	X	X	X
11	We have strong resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.		X	X	X	X	X
11.1		Young people will be supported within the community.		X	X	X	X
13	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive society.					X	X

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Section 3 – Description and Testimonials

Moray New Futures

Services and Beneficiaries

Moray New Futures (MNF) identifies and engages with the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups in Moray and supports them to progress towards the labour market. The Service delivers a holistic approach to providing support to develop the employability skills of these individuals and progress them into employment, other employment initiatives, further education and training. The service is now firmly embedded into the Moray Community and has seen a marked increase in referrals for the younger age groups over the last 2 years.

The client group comprises of individuals aged 16+ who due to the nature of their disadvantage are not able to be served effectively by other existing mainstream employment initiatives such as New Deal, Skillseekers etc. Those from the younger age group all fall within the More Choices, More Chances category. A typical client eligible for support from MNF will be facing multiple barriers which will include a combination of the following: Ex Offenders, Drug/Alcohol, Disabilities, Mental Health, Homelessness, Lone Parents, and Young People Leaving Care.

Individuals are supported by an Intensive Support Worker who provides one-to-one support and coordinates the support package by liaising between the specialist services that will provide the interventions for the client. Interventions include: confidence building, motivation, employment and training activities and work placement. The aim is to ensure that client will achieve positive progression and be able to sustain that progression. Many clients will require support for up to 2 years and the service offers up to 18 months of Aftercare once a clients progresses.

Moray New Futures has been instrumental in developing effective partnership working across Moray; creating a multi-agency approach to supporting people with multiple barriers. MNF is part of many partnerships and Strategy groups in Moray and contributes to developments within these groups and partnerships. In reflection of the joint approach, MNF has historically been funded by several agencies but on a year-by-year basis. This affects long term planning and sustainability and means that the loss of any funding has a profound effect on staff, the service and the ability to continue to deliver to clients and the Moray Community.

Moray New Futures is the only service which can effectively support unemployed people with multiple barriers from inactivity into employment. Over 45 agencies recognise MNF's successful record of achievement and make referrals to the service. There were approximately 130 referrals in 2007/08 (42% of them from the 16 – 24 age group). Clients, friends and family also recognise its value and over 33% of all referrals were self referrals.

Unfortunately demand already exceeds capacity (currently up to 40 clients at any one time), and has done so for the last 3 years. Based on the current referral to start rate, demand is currently running at over 60 clients at any one time. If the project was forced to reduce its resources further then there is a danger that it may become unsustainable and cease to operate.

What People Say

Comments from some of the professionals who have worked with Moray New Futures (MNF):

If the service was to go it would make the lives of the patients very, very difficult to move to a Drug free life. MNF is a key part of their progress back into work.

MNF is vital, without it the clients would be stuck and have nothing in order to change their lives.

MNF gives the possibility of a lifestyle that is considered by the clients to be 'normal'. (paraphrased)

The clients feel rejected because of their background, however, MNF give them a stepping stone and help them to learn new skills to move forward into work.

Without MNF they would never have gained employment. (paraphrased)

MNF is able to help the service meet the Scottish Executives new National Strategies, it would be silly to lose a provider of a solution to these needs. (paraphrased)

MNF would be sorely missed as it provides an employment service to ex-offenders.

MNF provides inclusivity with a specialism attached for ex-offenders including sexual offenders. MNF has proven contacts with local employers and training establishments that can't be replicated in house.

Ex-offenders actually do go through training and get jobs at the end of it.

The only problem is the frustration of the clients because of the waiting time it takes to get the service provided as there is insufficient funding. (paraphrased)

We are already feeling the impact of the possibility of no further funding as instead of taking on new referrals they are now being placed on a waiting list.... There is too much demand for this highly valued service. (MNF)

Comments from clients:

Moray New Futures enabled me to access things I would not have been able to access on my own. I have been introduced to other services, achieved my European Computer Driving Licence, Pass Plus, and I am now looking at going to college to do Highers so I can achieve my end goal of writing. My confidence has grown and my ability to believe in myself.

I have met like-minded people and made lasting friendships. It has given me a network of friends. MNF brings people of similar difficult backgrounds together in a safe environment. They understand me. (paraphrased)

I have found that Moray New Futures has been a great help to people like me in the way they have helped with my training. They provide much needed help to help gain confidence and gain full or part time employment. I feel if it wasn't for them I would have been lost in the system. I can't thank them enough.

I have gained confidence and learned new skills and been encouraged to go on and undertake college courses.

Without their support I would not have finished college and wouldn't be able to go on and do my HNC.

Boredom was my downfall. MNF re-established my self esteem, gave me things to do. I now interact with other people and am getting back to as normal a life as possible.

Moray Youth Action Transition Post

The Moray Youth Action Transition Post sits within a wider remit that Aberlour Childcare Trust has to support and promote the development and well being of young people. Other elements are not under threat so the information in this study relates solely to the Transition Post.

Services and Beneficiaries

The Moray Youth Action Transition Post is primarily concerned with preparing young people still within full time education for further education, employment or training. Most of the clients have been or are close to being excluded from school, or attend school very infrequently, and therefore they do not receive the same support that mainstream children enjoy.

This link with schools is what primarily differentiates the work of Moray Youth Action from the work of Moray New Futures. Moray Youth Action Transition post is primarily concerned with ensuring that young people make successful transition from education into employment and /or training and do not fall into the Moray Choices, More Chances category. The MYA Transition post works with young people who have been identified by Education as in need of support to make the transition from school into mainstream training, employment or some other positive destination. They would be referred approximately 4 - 6 months before they are due to leave full time education. The average length of time MYA work with their client is 4 months. If support beyond this point is still needed then the client may be referred to other support agencies including Moray New Futures.

Many of the clients are in the care of the Local Authority. Others are evicted from their home on turning 16. Because of this homeless aspect, Moray Youth Action become heavily involved in finding accommodation and assisting with tenancy applications. This work has to be prioritised because the trauma of being homeless is not conducive to resolving issues of employment, training or further education.

Issues that have to be addressed tend to be the softer skills and include:

- Lack of self esteem
- Lack of confidence (top 2 issues)
- Social skills
- Numeracy and literacy
- Presentation skills
- Interview and job search skills
- Time keeping
- Homemaking

Moray Youth Action can help up to 40 disadvantaged young people per year with this transition post. Last year 81% had positive outcomes (needs and desired outcomes are determined on an individual basis when a client enters the programme). Successes resulting from the service include:

- The development of a mechanical engineering SQA programme as an alternative to an academic curriculum. Four of the first six young people who

entered the programme passed with merit. Keith Grammar School has now adopted the programme.

- A young person who never came out of his house and couldn't make a cup of tea until MYA intervened.
- Finding accommodation for a very dependent young person and getting them started on 'Get Ready for Work'. This person would almost certainly have been lost in the system without assistance.
- Keeping a person who didn't fit into any of the usual categories from prison or death; one or the other was inevitable without help.
- An evening group that was set up to provide those who have changed their behaviour with a different peer group so that they are not tempted to return to their old ways.
- Working with Moray College to help some young people settle in – showing them around before the start of term and having a familiar face in the College twice a week in case they need help.

What People Say

Comments from clients:

My support worker is ace. She gave me support every time I needed it.

Thanks for everything.

They helped me get a flat and my benefits sorted out. I wish I had bought into the group work and programmes now.

The transition group support was really good. Staff spent time with me and understood; they were amazing to work with. They helped me get supported accommodation.

I got work experience and the chance to meet different people and do lots of things. I completed my John Muir award and learnt to cook meals. MYA helped me heaps.

MYA helped me to do the Duke of Edinburgh and go to college. The transition group was good.

I liked the one-to-one, it made me more confident about myself and I have matured a lot since I first started MYA.

I use to offend nearly every day. I have completely stopped now. I still need some help with getting ready for work but I don't have a worker right now because of the changes in MYA. I would like to do group work with MYA because then I would be able to speak about my problems and other stuff.

I would recommend the service to others like me as it does make a difference.

Comments from a concerned parent:

My child felt very much at home in the MYA project and with all their staff.

I cannot praise MYA high enough for all they have done for my child and helping him with his insecurities and building his confidence.

Mobile Information Bus

Services and Beneficiaries

Over 7,500 young people have visited the bus in the last 3 years and the numbers have increased year-on-year. 28% of all discussions and workshops on the MIB relate to drugs and alcohol (24 drug & alcohol activities per month). As well as the evening programmes of rural visits, the MIB has supported an increasing number of targeted interventions and initiatives including:

- Operation Avon*
- Community Street Football*
- Scottish Youth Parliament, Dialogue Youth
- Linkwood Community Project
- Young Carers
- Young Travellers
- Elgin Summer Scheme
- Pilmuir Community House
- Moray Safe Team
- Moray College Fresher's fair and Science fair
- Alcohol awareness campaigns, launches, galas, festivals and information events.

* Described in more detail below.

Operation Avon. The MIB supports initiatives such as Operation Avon. The operation, to tackle substance abuse in Moray, is led by Grampian Police and is supported by: Social Work, Youth Justice and the Community & Learning Development team - as well as the MIB. The operation has been running for several years and is based on intelligence indicating areas of known abuse at a particular time. The MIB makes an important contribution to this partnership, delivering key safety messages to young people on alcohol related issues.

Community Street Football. 367 youths aged 10-17 attended the MIB during the 5 months November 2007 to March 2008 touring with the street football. The sessions regularly saw groups of over 30 youths accessing the bus and playing facilitated football sessions. The partnership comprising: Sports Development, Fire Brigade, Volunteers, NHS, Community Wardens and Grampian Police were brought together by 'Street Football'.

What People Say

Comments from some of the professionals who have worked with the MIB:

As Community Beat Officer for Keith in Moray I feel that the MIB bus is a valuable resource for young people. I am periodically involved in operations to target youth problems in particular under-age drinking and these are arranged with the MIB in mind. The fact that it can be in the area where an operation is taking place is of great benefit to the Police and offers young people a relaxed environment where they can seek advice and information. – C.B.O Keith

I am the Community Police Officer for the Lossiemouth Beat area. The main problem in our communities is drug induced anti social behaviour, which often leads onto more serious social problems and less than desirable citizens. In an effort to combat this, the Operation Avon initiative was set up some time ago. The scheme is a multi agency approach and targets under-age drinking. These events are held throughout the Division on a near weekly basis.

I can honestly say that the bus is extremely well used and on its arrival is swamped with children seeking information, reassurance and in some cases, help. It is a friendly and safe place to visit. I am welcomed by staff and the children to join in conversation and the relaxed atmosphere allows an openness of views and some surprising questioning. The MIB links in with the Street Football initiative, a multi agency approach in combating anti social behaviour.

This service in my opinion should be expanded and championed as best practice. If a service requires funding, this is the one most deserving. The MIB can be depended upon and as I said earlier is the only partner agency supporting our Avon initiatives.’ **C.B.O – Lossiemouth Area**

‘Young people report they are not always comfortable asking their GP's 'Embarrassing' questions and equally do not always wish to ask guidance teachers or a parent. Youth workers are not available or have limited availability in all the areas the bus visits and detached youth work is currently under redesign, with more emphasis being placed on buildings based work. This further limits opportunities for young people to engage regarding health promotions materials in a setting of their choice. MIB may be the only opportunity for young people to access a young person friendly, confidential information point. It is no less than vital to the young people of moray to have this service maintained. Further the service is admired and aspired to in other rural areas, essentially a 'flagship' of health promotions for young people.’ – **Mental Health Worker – Moray**

Comments from some of the young people who use the bus:

‘The bus helped me learn some important facts about alcohol and drugs etc. Also if I had any problems I can go and discuss them in a friendly and social environment’ – **Jordan (14) male - Elgin area**

‘I thought it was good and I am able to say more on the bus than I am able to during school. I found it very educational’ – **Girl (15) - Portknockie**

‘All we done at school was watch videos about sex education, on the bus you can talk about it and learn much more’ – **Girl (16) - Portknockie**

‘I feel welcome, workers on the bus are friendly and approachable, I feel I learn much more because of this’ – **Boy (14) Buckie**

‘I find the bus very educational and I find it useful to express my views with the health workers. Also it keeps us off the streets at night.’ – **Jonny (16) Elgin area**

‘I think the bus is really good as it is easy to speak to the people as it is a friendly environment. If you have problems you can get information.’ – **Richie (15) Elgin area**

Information and Networking Support Officer

Services and Beneficiaries

The network of people who are interested in, or deliver services to, disadvantaged 16-24 year olds numbers approximately 140 in Moray. They operate in a number of different circles, health, education, social, justice, voluntary and so on. Each has their own take on the problem and access to different resources but they are all concerned with one thing – helping disadvantaged young people.

The Information and Networking Support Officer (INSO) does not help young people directly but is an enabler. The INSO binds the various support agencies together with information by proactively gathering details of activities and reports and disseminating consolidated information to those engaged in supporting young people. Information delivered to those directly involved is also forwarded to other interested parties where appropriate, making the circle of information commendably wide.

There are four ways in which the INSO has communicated with the partners and the wider community of agencies and bodies. The first has been through the weekly PeB information bulletin. This is a compendium of news, courses, articles, best practice examples and information; highlighting information that people would either not have found out about or would have had to search for, and consequently saved them time. Secondly, the INSO organises networking and training events for the partners. The third means of communication is via the Youthstart website which includes a PeB contact list, calendar and information library (called 'The Base'). Fourthly, the INSO undertook minor research at the request of members and answered specific questions they raised. These activities are discussed in the past tense because the incumbent has left Youthstart due to uncertainty around funding to start her own business developing the networking and communication activity.

From the Partners perspective, the main benefits of the INSO post are the time it saves them and the additional information they obtain. Both allow them to deliver more services and to do so more effectively.

In a survey carried out in February 2008 of the 140 people in receipt of the PeB newsletter, 37 responded and provide the following insight into the work of the INSO (percentages rounded to nearest whole number):

- 57% had attended a networking event.
- 49% wanted more opportunities to network whilst 37% said they had plenty of opportunities.
- 80% passed on information contained in the PeB newsletter to one or more people.
- 94% said the INSO service was useful to them in their work with 79% indicating that the service had saved them time.
- Respondents indicated how much time had been saved, from which we calculate at a pro-rata rate that the INSO saved people over 4,300 hours, equivalent to 2.2 fte positions.

What People Say

Comments from users of the INSO services:

To be able to contact the INSO and get instant help, information and support has been invaluable, particularly as a home worker.

A lot of the information in the PeB has been very helpful. I have used a lot of the suggested services and put young people forward for events and activities based on information provided by the INSO.

The PeB newsletter is excellent, informative and relevant.

An extremely valuable service. Friendly and motivated staff member who has been a saviour in times of crisis.

A brilliant service that is a bonus for Moray. It empowers the smaller organisations in the voluntary sector by keeping them in the loop.

If I need information or an answer, I know that if I go to the INSO she will be able to give me what I require. If she has not got the answer, she knows someone who does!

We receive information which is at our finger tips and saves time trawling the Internet.

The service is very good at informing in a one stop shop format about information available in Moray.

The INSO is a great resource, if you cannot find the information, all you have to do is contact the INSO.

I have found lots of things in the PeB newsletter and I truly believe that if it wasn't there we wouldn't know half the things that are going on.

The YIG gets things done and keeps members informed.

Events attract a good audience so they are useful.

INSO events are successful because they are a constant reminder of the young people issues.

If the information flow stops, you have got trouble.

Communication helps prevent duplication and gaps.

Please do not take this service away and keep it going.

Youthstart Partnership Manager Post

The Youthstart Partnership Manager post was established to support the aims of the Moray Regeneration Outcome Agreement 2005 – 2008. The MROA had a budget of over £1M over 3 years and was being delivered by 29 partner agencies including those from health, the Local Authority and the voluntary sector. The post was not filled immediately, therefore, the impact of not having a Partnership Manager can readily be identified.

Services and Beneficiaries

The main service is to the Youthstart partners so that they can provide coordinated and cost effective services to their clients. The partnership is a disparate group answering to many different masters and whilst their overall aim, to support disadvantaged young people, is common; they inevitably tend towards parochialism if not managed and aware of what the other partners are doing or proposing to do.

With the MROA there was a common thread with the funding that had been channelled through, mainly, Communities Scotland. Whilst the Youthstart Implementation Group had responsibility for allocating these funds, the Partnership Manager had the day-to-day responsibility for administering them. Whilst this part of the task has ended, the need to coordinate different agencies in a cost efficient way that maximises the services and benefits to disadvantaged young people remains.

The Partnership Manager fulfilled many roles, and these could not be dropped without a detrimental impact on the work of the Partnership. Beneficial activities undertaken by the Partnership Manager have included:

- Researching and applying for new funding.
- Freeing up Board members to undertake their primary roles.
- Creating shared objectives and keeping members focussed in a timely manner.
- Helping members to deliver their commitments.
- Organising and minuting meetings and pursuing actions between meetings.
- Maintaining a degree of independence for the Partnership.
- Facilitating inter-agency working.
- Relieving the pressure on statutory agencies.
- Managing Support Team staff and providing support to co-workers, such as the Youth Inclusion Worker and the Young Person's Health Development Officer.

The Youthstart Partnership has developed into a strong group but members have full-time responsibilities and admit that they would not like to take on the above roles and do not have the capacity to do so without a detrimental impact on their own activities.

What People Say

Comments from partners:

Things were not good before the Partnership Manager came into post.

The group needs a focus (Spoken with the connotation that this focus is provided by the Partnership Manager)

Moray has had value for money from Youthstart, the Partnership Manager post in particular.

At this point in time, a Partnership Manager is needed – someone needs to take responsibility.

The Partnership Manager became a figure head and centre for discussions; this has been a big help.

My first impression when I came to this area and the job was the lack of integrated services and that people did not have recognisable roles. This changed when the Partnership Manager came into post; things got a lot better.

Before the Partnership Manager came into post, many opportunities were lost.

The Partnership Manager provides the coordinating function. Someone needs the overall view and to bring together the strands and do the leg-work.

There were many more positive comments about Youthstart in general for which the Partnership Manager must take some credit.