

Chapter 8

Managing in a complex and fast-changing policy environment

Bryan Merton

Achieving your Youth and Community Work degree

This chapter is about policy and its implications for youth work services. It will help you to meet the following National Occupational Standards (February 2008).

- 4.1.1 Investigate the needs of young people and the community in relation to youth work
- 4.1.2 Evaluate and prioritise requirements for youth work activities from your organisation
- 4.2.2 Develop a strategic plan for youth work

Introduction

We begin this chapter by explaining why it is important for youth workers to understand the big picture and develop a perspective on policy if they are to influence the nature, range and quality of services provided for young people on the ground, and to maximise their central position responding simultaneously to policy and to young people and others in the communities with whom they work. We stress the value and importance of actively involving young people and their communities in the process and the rationale behind ensuring that services are locally determined. We reassert the importance policy makers attach to joining things up and some of the implications this emphasis has for leading and managing services. We conclude with a focus on dealing with complexity at every level and developing skills of influence and persuasion.

Getting the big picture

Why should youth workers be concerned about policy? Surely the job of the youth worker is to make relationships with young people and support them in their development

in whatever ways seem most appropriate. But how you work with young people is determined by a number of factors, one of the most significant being the current policy framework which shapes the publicly funded services provided.

Youth work is not a policy-free zone. Nor should it be because policy matters. It matters because it says a great deal about how society views and values young people and their best interests. And those who work directly with young people are in a strong position to influence the policy that shapes their work. Why? Because they know well the experiences, hopes, aspirations, fears and worries that affect young people as they develop. They know what concerns them and what interests them. And it is important that any policies and priorities that are created for young people take account of them. The best advocates for young people are young people themselves. The second best are those workers with whom they can build relationships of trust.

So youth policy and its continuous evolution is important. It also matters that those who work with young people have policy memory – that they know where policy comes from and why. It does not just come out of the ether. Policy is made by men and women and it is shaped by the circumstances and conditions of the time. It is important that front-line workers understand this and that is why the youth work profession is fortunate to have its evolution and development over the last 60 years chronicled by Bernard Davies (1999a, 1999b, 2008).

ACTIVITY 8.1

- *As a youth worker do you get involved in making policy at local level?*
- *How do you ensure it takes account of the needs and aspirations of the young people you work with?*
- *What examples can you give of ways in which you have been able to influence policy?*

Influencing policy locally

The policy framework that governs the nature, range and quality of services for young people, including youth work, is set by national government but the local authorities and their partners that actually provide these services contribute significantly too. Priorities are currently established through Local Area Agreements, and how much resource is allocated to these services and, more specifically, how these resources are deployed is also determined locally. The interplay between national policy as expressed through consultation (DfES, 2005/2006) and subsequent legislation, and strategic planning decisions made by local government officers and elected members leads to the provision made through clubs, centres and projects in neighbourhoods and across services – the kind of provision you are involved in.

In the last few years there has been a considerable degree of government interest in youth policy. For example, in 2007 Her Majesty's Treasury and the new Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) combined to produce a new and unprecedented ten-year

youth strategy (DCSF, 2007). As a further illustration of attempts to join up thinking across Whitehall, the Youth Justice Board, previously housed in the Home Office, was transferred to the new Department for Children, Schools and Families. And later in 2007 the government introduced PSA (Public Service Agreement) 14 that has as its objective to increase the number of children and young people on the path to success. This PSA established a set of indicators agreed between central and local government that will be overseen and monitored by the nine Regional Government Offices in England. There are five indicators.

- 1 Reduce the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training.
- 2 More participation in positive activities.
- 3 Reduce the proportion of young people using illicit drugs, alcohol or volatile substances.
- 4 Reduce the under-18 conception rate.
- 5 Reduce the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system aged 10–17.

It is important to recognise that while the terms, conditions and systems for shaping policy making between Whitehall and Town Hall may change, the underlying principle of jointly taking responsibility for determining the provision of services will not.

All this may seem to be removed by some distance from the day-to-day concerns of youth workers and their managers responsible for ensuring that there are activities and services for young people to take part in locally. They are required to make provision based on a thorough and detailed assessment of needs in localities and this assessment should be undertaken by the local authority and its partners, including young people themselves. The provision established as a result of this assessment should be set out in the local children and young people's plan.

The most recent policy statement (DCSF, 2008) that has been issued emphasises the importance of ensuring that provision is made by a wide range of suppliers, including those in the voluntary and community sector and the private sector as well as by the local authority. Government has also urged that every effort must be made to reduce barriers to access to provision. These barriers have in the past tended to mean that those who stand to gain most from the opportunities do not avail themselves of them.

This should help to challenge the tendency for well-established patterns of provision to remain, even though there are cases where they may not be well used by young people and bring little benefit to local communities. For fear of losing the support of local people, councillors are sometimes reluctant to lose any provision in their constituencies even if they are providing a poor-quality service. This may be for good reason in the sense that once resources are lost to a service it is sometimes very hard to get them back in any form. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the commissioning process is intended to ensure that outdated provision and inefficient services are in effect de-commissioned. For further information on what government expects of local authorities and their partners, carefully read the guidance that has been issued (DCSF, 2008).

ACTIVITY 8.2

- *How is provision determined in your area?*
- *Is the thumbprint of national policy and Local Area Agreements evident in the local youth offer?*
- *How have you been involved in assessing needs and in identifying gaps?*
- *Have young people been involved and in which ways?*
- *Have parents been consulted?*
- *What role do elected members play in the process?*
- *What potential benefits could emerge from the apparent threat to close a local facility?*
- *Do you think that the pattern of provision reflects what young people need and want?*

Actively involving young people

Government policy constantly reasserts the importance of gathering the views of local young people in shaping and influencing policy at national and local levels. As a youth worker you will welcome this as it represents what good youth work stands for – supporting young people in finding their place and expressing their voice in society. It is also consistent with the broader social policy objective of ensuring that the voice of service users is instrumental in determining priorities and the nature and quality of the services provided.

Policy makers also recognise that it is not always straightforward to secure the voice of those who might stand to gain most from services – those at risk and vulnerable who seem to be excluded from much provision. You have probably experienced this. It tends to be the bright, articulate, well-motivated young people who put themselves forward to take part in representative structures and processes such as youth forums and councils. While their voice is important and deserves to be heard, it can drown out the views of their less-confident peers who may have valuable things to say but lack the confidence to do so. This may be because discussion often takes place in settings and forms that the less articulate and confident find challenging – meetings with papers to read, opinions to record and decisions to note. Those who are ill at ease in these ‘adult’ contexts may find the internet and other forms of communication through new technology less threatening, as well as more conversational and informal opportunities to express their views.

ACTIVITY 8.3

- *What arrangements does your organisation make to manage the active involvement of young people in shaping provision locally?*
- *How successfully do they capture the voice of the less confident and articulate young people in your area?*
- *How do you ensure that disadvantaged young people have a say in the provision and activities on offer where they live?*

Going local

As our communities become more diverse and complex they present government at national and local level with new challenges. This is compounded by the speed and range of ways in which people communicate, as well as the spread and increase in information that is available and which can be used to influence opinions and decisions. Sometimes government seems very remote and the concerns of those in the inner circle seem to be out of touch with local people. Some policy makers recognise this and that is why slogans such as 'double devolution' (Weaver, 2006) have emerged as a possible response.

The rationale behind such an idea is that local people living in neighbourhoods know well what is in their interests and may in some cases know better than those who are elected to make decisions on their behalf. That is why there has been a growth in more local structures for decision making such as community councils and neighbourhood forums. And why there is greater interest and investment in social enterprises and community interest companies. These are seen to have a more organic and authentic approach to dealing with the challenges of modern living than the more ponderous and bureaucratic procedures adopted by local authorities.

Although there are clearly advantages in developing very local structures and processes for making decisions about policy priorities and resource allocation in communities, there may be disadvantages. One example could be that the vision of local people may be too narrow, particularly if they have only ever lived in one location. If they have developed social capital of a bonding kind (as described in Chapter 7), it may have led to a reluctance and resistance to newcomers and outsiders, such as travellers, refugees or asylum-seekers. If they have only ever encountered a limited number of solutions to problems, they may be unaware that others might exist. They may be unable to appreciate the 'big picture' that is sometimes needed to afford different perspectives on local situations.

An example that may be familiar to you as a youth worker is how easily communities can take against the young. The local press often demonises young people and lays many of the community's social problems at their door. All young people can be stigmatised by the behaviour of a limited number of 'trouble-makers'. More tolerant and compassionate attitudes towards the young may be resisted by older people who may feel threatened or frightened by them.

ACTIVITY 8.4

- *What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of double devolution – of pushing decision making down to the grass roots?*
- *What do you know of intergenerational misunderstanding and conflict in neighbourhoods where you work or have worked?*
- *What do you think can be done to reduce it?*

Making services available

Policy changes fast and in such a volatile environment it is hard to keep up. For example, the last six years has seen the launch of a Change for Children programme which has sought to make services more locally responsive and to join them up better so that children and young people's needs are treated holistically and no one is in danger of falling through the net.

For those young people who are deemed to be 'at risk', more targeted services have been introduced and these include teams of specialist workers around the child or the young person. This policy measure is based on the assumption that in any neighbourhood there is a significant and identifiable cohort of young people who are at risk of exclusion, neglect, mistreatment and other forms of social harm. It is believed that if they are identified early enough and programmes of prevention are introduced, then there will be less cause to intervene later when the child or young person has come to the attention of the authorities because they have moved from being 'at risk' to being 'in trouble'. We will return to this later.

First though it is important to consider whether some services are best provided locally at neighbourhood level and some centrally or across a local authority. For example, it should be possible to provide in each neighbourhood, however defined, a centre providing good-quality positive activities of a recreational and informal educational kind – a place to go with things to do and people to talk to.

But when resources are limited it may not be possible for the local authority to provide each neighbourhood with a specialist centre for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities that is not school based, for example. Not everything can necessarily be replicated at neighbourhood level.

Youth work takes many different forms and that is one reason why it is challenging to manage it effectively. There are good arguments for ensuring that in each neighbourhood there should be

- a magnet centre of positive activities;
- smaller satellite provision of similar activities run by partner services and agencies;
- a team of detached and outreach workers deployed to work with young people who may not be attracted to building-based provision;
- information, advice, guidance and counselling services in schools and in the community;
- more targeted and individualised programmes for those at risk.

Managing open access, street-based and targeted provision and the traffic of young people between them is a task facing all youth workers. It is important that you encourage young people to move between different forms of provision so that they can take advantage of the full range of opportunities and networks that are available to them.

If government is serious about devolving decision making and resource allocation to neighbourhoods, then an investment in community development is essential. This means

not only spending money on the physical fabric of a neighbourhood, important though this is, but also ensuring that local people develop the skills, knowledge and awareness to develop programmes and projects that meet needs and respond to aspirations. Communities do not develop overnight. The process can be slow and painstaking. Trust has to be built, relationships strengthened and alliances formed. People have to be listened to, different viewpoints reconciled and priorities negotiated and agreed. Youth work becomes more than directly working with young people. It means winning the support of families and different community groups. It has to be established in the warp and weft of the neighbourhood. This can be done but it requires patience, sensitivity and tenacity; it entails the resilience, resolve and resourcefulness that are the very qualities that you try to inspire in the young people you work with.

ACTIVITY 8.5

- What is the range of positive activities, services and opportunities in your area?
- Do young people take advantage of the full range?
- Are there important elements missing?
- Do young people move between different forms of provision and extend their network of contacts and repertoires of skills and interests?
- How do you help them to manage this?
- How do you involve the local community in supporting activities for young people in the area?

Joining things up

As well as more local neighbourhood-based determination of priorities and provision, policy is driving local authorities and their partners to collaborate more intensively in securing more coherent, seamless services and opportunities for young people's support and development. Although this trend in social policy can be traced back to the early years of the New Labour government, it did not surface significantly for youth workers and providers of services for young people until the publication of the *Youth Matters* Green Paper in 2005. Here Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) were identified with the intention of making services for young people *more integrated, efficient and effective*. The paper described the development of integrated youth support services, under the leadership of local authorities, working through Children's Trusts. This would lead to a

single body responsible and accountable for youth policy and the Every Child Matters outcomes in each area [which will] enable integrated planning and commissioning of the full range of services for teenagers from universal activities through to more specialist and targeted support. This will lead to an integrated youth support service, focused on and structured around young people's needs and involving a wide range of providers, including voluntary and community organisations.

(DfES, 2005)

The Children's Workforce Development Council, which has been charged with overseeing and developing the whole workforce for children and young people's services, defines integration as follows:

Integrated working is where everyone supporting children and young people works together effectively to put the child at the centre, meet their needs and improve their lives.

By combining their professional expertise, knowledge and skills, and involving the child or young person and family throughout, practitioners can identify needs earlier, deliver a coordinated package of support that is centred on the child or young person, and help to secure better outcomes for them.

Integrated working is achieved through collaboration and coordination at all levels, across all services, in both single and multi agency settings. It requires clear and strong leadership and management. It is facilitated by the adoption of common services delivery models, tools and processes.

(CWDC, 2008, p1)

The National Youth Agency and the management training and consultancy company FPM Training have jointly produced a paper in which they assert that the breadth of the definition of integration will mean that managers will have to work with partners and stakeholders in their area to agree what provision is needed. This marks a departure from the more traditional approach of a tight, usually centralised specification that leads to the implementation of policy.

Managers will need to develop the skills to work with loose and ambiguous overarching definitions and specifications. Within these broad parameters they will also need to lead and manage tightly defined programmes of action which develop and deliver services based on the needs of young people.

(Ford, 2008, para 31)

The core principles that will underpin any attempt to join up services for young people include:

- being centred on the young person;
- providing the four components of the youth offer (see Chapter 7);
- creating a focus on early intervention and prevention and providing both universal and targeted services so as to meet young people's needs;
- involving young people in planning and delivery;
- integrating leadership and management across specialist services;
- breaking down barriers between professionals delivering services to young people;
- adopting a multi-agency approach;
- achieving efficiencies through integrated delivery and economies of scale so as to redirect resources to front-line delivery;

- bringing together planning, commissioning and providing services to deliver local solutions through Children's Trusts.

On paper this all makes sense. In practice it is a lot more difficult. It is tempting to ask whether integration is a dream or it can be made to work. Would not 'closer alignment' of services be more realistic than integration? It is important to be clear about what aspects of services are meant to be joined up.

First, what kind of *processes* can be joined up? In assessing the needs of young people who have been targeted for prevention and intervention because they are judged to be at risk, it makes sense to ensure that this is done to a common framework to be used by all service providers – teachers, youth workers, social workers, education welfare officers, personal advisers and so on. Therefore the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has been introduced and practitioners trained in its use. This is an example of the integration of a process.

Second, *resources* are meant to be pooled. There is intended to be a portion of each service's budget that is shared in the cause of integration. For example, from 2008 Youth Offending Services are meant to pool with local youth support services 10 per cent of the budget of the Youth Justice Board funding they would expect to divert to young people's preventative activities (DCSF, 2007).

Information about young people is to be shared across services and protocols introduced for this purpose. This is a controversial matter for youth workers whose relationships with young people are built on trust (Davies and Merton, 2009, p18). It may be difficult to retain this when the young people are made aware that the youth worker is required to share information with other service providers, albeit in the best interests of the young person.

Facilities should be shared including the office accommodation where the team around the young person are housed. Co-location is meant to ensure that it is easier for young people to access services ('only one door') and for practitioners to keep each other in touch and informed about what is happening with particular young people. It is questionable whether this is feasible or even necessary to enable people to work effectively together.

Skills and *insights* should also be shared and joined up so that professionals can learn from each other and perhaps in time some of the boundaries that have traditionally separated them and allowed them to develop their own 'professional identities' can be overcome. This makes some youth workers feel very nervous. Why? Because they sense that their own particular identity and methods, based on a well-honed and much-cherished set of values, may well be undermined in the drive to create a kind of hybrid 'youth professional' referred to in *Aiming High* (DCSF, 2007) and by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).

The joining up of *staff* is a contentious issue. Each profession working with young people (teachers, youth workers, social workers, personal advisers, education welfare officers, child psychologists) brings to their work a distinctive set of values, principles, insights, knowledge and skills. These have been imparted, learned and modified over the years in the light of experience and evolving statutory duties and policy imperatives. However, each

contributes in a distinctive way to the support and development of young people. It is important that these different perspectives and approaches are not lost and the government recognises this. Integration does not necessarily mean a single homogenous workforce.

The key question that has to be asked in relation to this question of integration is 'Who benefits?' If it can be shown that young people get a better service that more satisfactorily meets their needs and expectations from joining things up, then the policy can be justified. If the evidence is that it makes no difference, then one has to ask whether it is worth the costly re-organisation and uncertainty that the introduction of a new policy inevitably entails. The ultimate test of policy, acknowledged by those who make it, is whether those intended to use the services and benefit from them – in this case young people and their communities – actually do use them in greater numbers and prosper from doing so. On this latter question the jury is still out, since the roll-out and implementation of integrated support and development of services for young people has yet to take hold as we write.

ACTIVITY 8.6

- *What do you think of the idea of integrating services for young people?*
- *How does it affect you and the work you do with young people?*
- *How has the service you provide been enhanced by the process?*
- *What new skills and insights have you acquired?*
- *Is there evidence that young people get a better deal as a result?*

Dealing with complexity

It is logical to tackle interconnected problems, sometimes referred to as 'wicked issues', in joined-up ways. It is an entirely reasonable premise upon which to base a policy. However, systems are needed to handle the complexity of the issues that are involved. Many people find it difficult to operate effectively in the zone of complexity. This is because it is hard to contain a great deal of information within one's head, as well as an often complicated map of the different interests, agencies and organisations involved. Clarity is hard to come by in these situations and if you are not clear about something, it is hard to think your way through it. How then do you manage when you are working like this?

There is no simple answer but some people find it useful to draw diagrams so they can picture the different facets of an issue and how they interrelate. In this way you can see which aspects of a problem can be dealt with independently of others and which cannot. Drawing lines and arrows between different aspects can be helpful. Other people use spidergrams as a device for doing something similar because they clarify how things are connected. They can also represent how people think and some analysis of them might reveal different ways of seeing matters. This is important because a lot of problems are caused by differences in perception between people about the same things.

One of the problems you are likely to face in working in the zone of complexity – where you are asked to handle considerable amounts of information and weigh different points of view – is that you feel you should be in control of events. If you are not in control, you may feel you are falling short of what is expected. Not being in control therefore may well make you anxious and feeling too high a level of anxiety can impair your performance. (Being in control is also considered in Chapter 2 in relation to managing yourself.)

One way forward may be to stop thinking you have to be in control and instead acknowledge complexity as a way of working and respond to it as best you can. Some people always prefer to have a plan in their heads about how they will deal with a situation; that helps to reduce the anxiety of trying to handle and control too many variables. But a military strategist once said that no plan outlives engagement with the enemy. This may be true of your work too. You may have worked out how you intend to manage a situation but then when you get into it, you find it different to what you expected, or you react differently to what you find to the way you had anticipated. Your plan then immediately flies out of the window. The trick is not to panic but to perhaps just ‘go with the flow’ (mirroring good responsive youth work) and see where it takes you. Another plan may emerge.

Taking responsibility

Most of us are brought up to believe that we live in a fairly stable, predictable world and we have built our institutions to reflect that. Therefore we have until now experienced organisations as hierarchical, orderly, rules-based and bureaucratically administered (see Chapter 3 for more about organisations). They may be slow and sometimes cumbersome but they are consistent and seek to be rational in their behaviours. (It does not mean that they always are! After all, they are composed of people who are capable of responding irrationally, in particular when they feel they are under pressure.)

As technology advances, so information accumulates and moves at great speed across institutional boundaries. This means that decisions are made swiftly and institutions have had to adapt to take account of these changes. They have sought to become what are sometimes referred to as ‘learning organisations’ – flat (less hierarchical), fluid and flexible so that they can evolve and develop in response to what their users want and the fast-changing, complex and sometimes chaotic environment.

This has led to an abandonment in some organisations of traditional ‘command and control’ methods of management to new styles that seek to ‘empower’ staff who are close to the service user so they can make decisions for themselves without having to refer them up for approval by a ‘line manager’. There has been a blurring of ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ as organisations have tried to adopt what is now referred to as more ‘distributed’ forms of leadership (e.g. McKimm and Held, 2009).

This devolves responsibility for making decisions further down the line with the hope and expectation that ‘better’ decisions will be taken. It can induce in front-line staff a degree of concern and anxiety, even ambivalence, as they both welcome and fear the added responsibilities which have been conferred upon them.

One consequence of this development is a tendency for people to react to events and incidents which further dilutes their sense of control. A former British prime minister was well

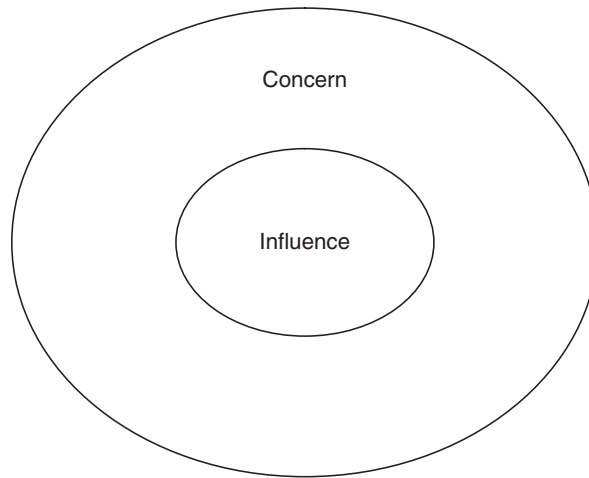


Figure 8.1 Circle of concern and circle of influence (Covey, 1989)

known for describing the most destabilising factors in his time as leader of the nation as 'events, dear boy, events'. So it must be for youth workers and others operating on the front line of public services as another policy directive swirls down from on high or yet another crisis hits a family or a community.

One writer on management (Covey, 1989) argues that effective people – whether leaders, managers or front-line staff – focus their attention and effort on things they can affect and in doing so tend to gain more influence. More reactive people are characterised as being more focused on the circle of concern. They may be unable to exercise any control over some of the problems and difficulties that affect them and then seek to blame others and avoid responsibility. If you are able to use your influence to expand into the circle of concern, you are more likely to have an impact on the complex and volatile situations you face and thereby increase your influence.

ACTIVITY 8.7

- *How much control do you feel over your work?*
- *To what extent are you empowered to make key decisions?*
- *To what extent do you feel able to extend your area of influence and lessen your area of concern?*

Developing the skills of influence and persuasion

When you are working in a situation where you have no formal power, then you have to use whatever influence you can muster. In a multi-agency team you are likely to be one

of several people who will each have a particular view of what might be the best way to intervene with a young person or a group of young people. If you think that a particular course of action may not be in the best interests of the young person or the group, you will then have to use your influencing skills in order to have your viewpoint listened to seriously and taken account of. This is influencing in order to persuade others.

There are other reasons why you may want to influence other people: to gain their support, to inspire them to give their best, to advocate on behalf of a group of young people, to win resources for a project, to co-operate with an organisation which can add value to the work you are doing.

Influencing skills require you to have a combination of the following:

- *self-awareness* – so you know your strengths and weaknesses, prejudices, the things that ‘push your buttons’ and upset you, your attitudes to people in authority;
- *interpersonal skills* – building a rapport with others, being open and direct, showing empathy and understanding, valuing and respecting what others can do, engendering trust;
- *communication* – clearly, concisely and enthusiastically, promising less and delivering more, reading the other person accurately, being an attentive and an active listener;
- *assertiveness* – being clear and confident, stating any differences with confidence and certainty, being consistent, standing your ground.

Building a rapport is an important first step in developing a strong position to influence. This means that you can help create a climate of trust and understanding. It also means that you can show you are on the same wavelength as others. Rapport is built by matching what others are doing without appearing to engage in imitation – ‘the most sincere form of flattery’. Some people like to be flattered, others are made suspicious by it. If you can indicate that you see the world in a similar way and you have things in common, then that helps too. You can also build it by showing respect and understanding for the other’s situation, but this has to be done with sincerity. The most convincing way to build rapport is to show that you are genuinely interested in the other person and how they see the world. You may not agree with the other’s opinion but you can respect the other’s right to hold and express it.

It helps to build rapport and develop your skills of influencing if you can reveal the values and impulses that drive you and discover those that drive the other, and if, in the words of St Francis of Assisi, you can ‘seek to understand before seeking to be understood’ – in other words make the other person feel their concerns have priority.

Thirty years ago negotiations between the Arabs and the Israelis over the Sinai desert had come to an impasse and a resolution was only found when the two major protagonists were encouraged to explore what the main drivers were for the other’s position. In the peace talks at Camp David, President Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Begin of Israel made it clear that they each wanted control over the Sinai desert. When invited to share with each other why this disputed territory was so

important, President Sadat explained that the driver behind his point of view was sovereignty because the land had always been Egypt's; whereas for Prime Minister Begin the issue was one of security because he saw the occupation of the territory as a threat to the borders of Israel. By sharing these differences, the seeds of eventual agreement were sown. The Sinai desert remained under Egyptian sovereignty and by agreeing that it would not be occupied Israel's need for security was satisfied. It proved possible to accommodate the two different drivers and each side felt they had gained some measure of assurance.

(Knight, 1995, p128)

In any negotiation there has to be some point at which alternatives to the preferred position can be considered. If neither party comes to the table with a best alternative, then they are not really serious about reaching agreement. In other words there should be some fall-back position which each side is prepared to adopt that will bring them closer than they would be without it. So if you are involved in a negotiation and are required to deploy your influencing skills, ensure that you come prepared to advance a different proposition from the one you begin with.

Furthermore, if you are seeking to influence the outcome of an argument or difference of view, then make sure you bring some evidence to support your position. Assertion followed by counter-assertion is probably going to end in frustration for both parties. Deadlock can sometimes be broken when assertion is illustrated and enhanced by evidence that substantiates the points being made. Clarity of analysis and argument buttressed by reliable evidence is usually sufficient to ensure that you can effectively influence the outcome.

ACTIVITY 8.8

- *How well honed are your influencing skills?*
- *Identify an example of a situation where you have successfully used them to secure the outcome you were seeking.*
- *How would you explain your success?*
- *Now identify an example when you used them without 'success'.*
- *What have you learned from that situation that you would seek to apply in others?*

C H A P T E R R E V I E W

This chapter has discussed key priorities of policy about services for young people and identified some of the implications, emphasising government's concern:

- to ensure there are plenty of providers of young people's activities and services;
- that young people's voice is heard and they have a say about that provision;

- that decisions about services are made locally and that delivery is often neighbourhood based;
- that the services delivered and the workforce involved are more integrated.

The chapter has also identified some of the difficulties workers and managers face in dealing with this complexity and how best to maximise your influence for the benefit of young people.

FURTHER READING

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USEFUL WEBSITES

CWDC integrated working section www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/integrated-working

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