

University of Birmingham/Demos Policy Commission

Report of the “Changing Citizens’ Behaviour” workshop, 17 February 2011

This workshop explored current policy and research thinking about the idea of changing citizens’ behaviour in different areas of social and personal life, and considered some of the questions that interventions designed to change behaviour raise for the respective roles of the state, local services, individuals and families. The workshop reviewed a range of approaches to behaviour change and their applicability to local public services, paying particular attention to the role of ‘nudge’. Participants debated whether and how the reductions in public spending, the changes to local public service provision and the increased focus on ‘self-help’ will generate new approaches to change behaviour. They also explored what could be learned from current practice about how behaviour change worked in different policy and service areas, and the particular implications for changing young people’s behaviour as citizens and service users.

Session One: Roundtable

This workshop began with a roundtable discussion of ‘the role of public services in changing citizens’ behaviour’. The discussion was led by **Kathryn Ecclestone** (Professor of Social Inclusion and Education, and a Commissioner) who gave an overview of ideas in current policy about changing citizens’ behaviour in different areas of social and personal life, and highlighted questions about the respective roles of the state, local services, individuals and families in interventions to change behaviour.

Kathryn emphasised that the state has always tried to change behaviour, and that a great deal can be learned from past experiences to help shape whether and how we employ behaviour change strategies in the future. The state has made use of a range of levers to influence behaviour in the past including: punishment, regulation and incentives. It has made assumptions about human nature to inform its strategies including considering individuals as self-interested rational actors or as individuals who are shaped by norms and values that might interrupt and override rational behaviour. Its strategies have been overt and covert and have included subliminal attempts to engineer social relations and/or change individual behaviour. Important questions arise in relation to any attempts at social engineering in general and the current interest in behavioural psychology to secure change in individuals or groups. These are technical (how to do it), moral and ethical (should it be done, in what circumstances and to whom) and political questions (what is to be gained/lost from pursuing social engineering in general and behaviour change in particular)?

The roundtable discussion was structured around two themes with each theme introduced by invited experts.

Theme 1: What are the main ideas behind policy based on ‘nudge’ approaches? How influential are these ideas in different areas of policy? How robust is the evidence base for ‘nudge’? What examples of ‘nudge’ have been successful? What are the implications of ‘nudge’ for interventions to change citizens’ behaviour in different areas of social and personal life? What are the implications of nudge for the role of the state, other agencies, individuals and communities? **Stuart Derbyshire**, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Birmingham, opened the session making the following key points:

- Origins – nudge theories emerged with the move away from the perception of individuals as rational information processors with insight into their personal behaviours that occurred in the late 20th century.
- Limitations of nudge:
 - Practical problems - human behaviours are extremely complex and influenced by a range of interconnected factors. It is therefore difficult to determine the precise (chain of) nudge interventions required to produce a particular behaviour change, and what influence (if any) the different interventions have on each other. Nudge is likely to be most effective in narrow circumstances in controlled environments (e.g. encouraging individuals to recycling towels in a hotel) and less effective for broader, complex life situations and choices.
 - Nudge creates a diminished view of human beings, perceiving them as simplistic beings. Eventually individuals start to see through the ‘nudges’ – through attempts to manipulate their behaviour.
 - Nudge approaches dodge the need to have serious discussions about often difficult issues underlying the behaviour(s) in question

Liz Richardson (Research Fellow at the Institute for Political and Economic Governance (IPEG), University of Manchester and Director of Trafford Hall, home of the National Communities Resource Centre) provided an alternative perspective arguing that:

- There is a need to address myths about nudge e.g. that it is i) covert and underhand, ii) not supported by citizens, and iii) simply about changing the behaviour of individuals and not about collective action
- ‘Nudge’ and the MINDSPACE framework developed by the Institute for Government and the Cabinet Office (<http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/images/files/MINDSPACE-full.pdf>) provide a useful set of tools for understanding and relating to human beings and all

their complex motivations, which in turn help in developing relevant programmes/services. Both the nudge and the MINDSPACE frameworks take context and infrastructure into account, and acknowledge the need to deliberate the legitimacy of behaviour change interventions.

- Data from randomised controlled trials undertaken by research teams led from IPEG suggest that:
 - nudging increases the likelihood of putting desired behaviours into action, helping to make the most of the untapped potential that exists for citizens to do (more of) i) the behaviours they would 'like to do anyway', ii) simple/uncontroversial activities (e.g. giving books to charity) that people don't do because 'life gets in the way'.
 - Nudge is not necessarily a one way processes – communities can take action to nudge public professionals to act in certain ways. It was noted that if citizens are mobilized to speak /act, public institutions need to be geared up to respond.
 - Nudge needs to be linked to 'think' i.e. deliberative approaches that enable people to reflect on the issues that matter to them and to consider and debate the different options available. (For more information on nudge and deliberation see:
http://www.bloomsburyacademic.com/view/Nudge_Nudge_Think_Think_9781849662284/book-ba-9781849662284.xml)

The discussion that followed covered the following issues and questions:

- Who defines what behaviour needs to change? What is the balance between decisions at central and local levels? IPEG evidence suggests that behaviour change interventions designed and implemented at a local level are more effective.
- The value of joint/dual strategies that i) use deliberative approaches within local contexts to come up with the desired outcomes (giving them legitimacy) and then ii) use 'nudge approaches' to encourage those outcomes. This allows individuals/groups/professionals/practitioners to find the solutions that work best within their local area.
- A wide spectrum of behaviour change approaches and policy interventions exist. The value of different approaches/interventions must be considered within specific contexts and for particular behaviours. Nudge is perhaps most useful in triggering action from pre-existing desire as opposed to nudging people into awareness or into building a particular interest.

- The ethics of covert versus explicit efforts to change citizens' behaviour. Do approaches like nudge undermine the democratic process and processes of open debate?
- How do you measure the impact of behaviour change interventions? Do randomised controlled trials offer a robust method for measuring impact, or are they inappropriate in some areas of public policy? Can we link outcomes data to cost-benefit analysis?
- Are there areas/topics where nudge and behaviour change interventions more broadly, are simply not appropriate? Perhaps this is something that needs to be decided at a local level?
- To what extent is 'nudge' simply a new buzzword, part of a new political discourse?
- Need to situate 'nudge' and other behaviour change mechanisms within a broader governance context. Outcomes are identified and agreed through the practice of politics, politics is undertaken within an agreed framework of governance principles that also shape how resources are allocated and needs/aspirations are to be met, 'nudge' becomes useful at the point of action – of making agreed changes.

Theme 2 focused on behaviour change in public policy: What examples are there of policy interventions designed to change behaviour? Are interventions different in, for example, mental and physical health, moral and character development, and family activities? What has been, and might continue to be, the role of public services in changing behaviour in these areas? How will reductions in public spending, changes to local public service provision and an increased focus on 'self-help' generate new approaches? What lessons does history offer us in relation to changing the behaviour of children and young people?

James Arthur, Professor of Education and Citizenship, University of Birmingham, spoke about his work on Character Education, highlighting the following key points:

- It is dangerous for the state to intervene in questions of character development in society, not least because politicians tend not to be directly involved and so curriculum are designed with political purposes but without direct engagement by politicians.
- Civil society should produce the moral criteria by which government is judged
- There is much debate about the place of citizenship education in the curriculum. Evaluations suggest that it has had limited success in achieving its goals (e.g. citizenship education has been delivered for the last 10 years but has not made

much of a difference in encouraging young people to vote). The current government is thinking of abolishing it.

- We don't know enough about what is happening on the ground (in schools and universities) in terms of the moral education of young people and how their characters are shaped through direct interventions.
- His research undertaken with young people between 3 and 25 years of age and involving a sample of 70,000 has explored how the content and teaching of different subjects e.g. history can influence character. It has also examined the moral influences on sixth formers e.g. how are they prepared to talk about their character and how can this help provide guidance for the completion of 'personal statements', and on undergraduates – what are the moral influences on them and how do they have influence?
- The definition of 'character' must not focus only on character capabilities and technical competences (as in the Demos Character Commission) but must include a deeper, broader definition involving ethical questions about the 'good society' and the 'good citizen'. This, of course, requires unpacking of value judgments encapsulated in 'good'.

The ensuing discussion covered the following issues and questions:

- The notion of the 'good citizen' must encapsulate a balance between social and moral values and political literacy.
- A narrow focus on technical competences of character and training young people to develop specific skills/attributes is 'inhuman' and reductionist. It marginalises the fact that humans live in communities, cultures, and value systems in which they learn through interaction with other humans.
- It is necessary for societies to have explicit statements of the values they hold and want to promote.
- Everyone has a character – for bad or good – and that character can be modified; a great deal of education is about changing individuals' characters to fit within their broader societies.
- The notion of a good citizen is different in different country contexts, regime types, cultures and religions.
- How do you facilitate the acquisition of the characteristics of 'the good citizen' in young people who have not got them from mainstream channels e.g. parental guidance and schools?

- Government intervention over the past three decades can be seen to have strained relationships between teachers and students, limiting opportunities for the former to aid the character development of the latter.
- The state should not 'crowd out' civil society; part of the role of civil society is to prevent mastery by the state. However some institutions e.g. schools could play more of a role than they currently do in supporting their communities.

Louise Morpeth, co-Director, The Social Research Unit, Dartington, highlighted four themes found to be important in thinking about behaviour change programmes for children:

- **Shifting** public resources from ineffective programmes to evidence based programmes. Too many initiatives and established activities are unproven in terms of improving outcomes, yet are 'rolled out' or continued. Associated issues: the need for clarity about what is acceptable as evidence; questions of fidelity of programme design and impact of local contextual factors on implementation; importance of evaluation.
- **Balancing the portfolio of activities** with appropriate combinations of prevention, early intervention and treatment.
- **Incentives** – what incentives do public services have/need to use evidence based programmes to improve outcomes, e.g. children's centres primarily used by middle classes not the vulnerable families who they are designed for: what incentive would be needed to encourage the service to focus on vulnerable groups and those families to use the service? This is particularly significant in the current economic climate. Financing incentives are likely to be increasingly important in the coming years.
- **Portfolio** – looking at behaviour change programmes in a similar light to investment portfolios, considering costs and benefits of different interventions for individuals and for society more broadly.

Kevin Myers, Senior Lecturer in Social History and Education (University of Birmingham) provided an historical perspective arguing that:

- The project of 'behaviour change' dates back to at least the 1830s. History has shown:
 - that there is a tendency for proponents of particular methods to make large claims which need to be treated with some scepticism. Evaluation should be a central consideration but is too often marginalised. Longitudinal studies are particularly important. We must be wary of extrapolating findings from small scale studies to larger populations.

- the importance of adopting a portfolio of approaches in encouraging behaviour change. Legislation is an essential policy instrument in the democratic process.
- It is possible to discern three phases that reflect changes in approaches to service provision and in the perception of/relationship with citizens
 - 1830- late 19C – the modern state constructed its institutions including the workhouse – appealed to enlightened self-interest at the time
 - Late 19C – 1940s – the ‘social security’ state emerged and new institutions were designed based on individualised, localised and particularised provision, shaped by local values and culture. In the 1930s the ‘child guidance project’ introduced behaviourism/development psychology into children’s development. Emphasis was placed on parents and carers talking to and spending time with their children. In public services this translated into authority figures developing a new relationship with children based on understanding the child and emphasising the roles of wisdom and trust as key elements in how public services should be delivered.
 - 1940-20C – the state acting to correct market failure – increasing focus on individualised consumerism in public services
- The model of community organisation has also changed and evolved over the last three decades (moving away from longstanding groups with good institutional infrastructures e.g. religious groups, trade unions, to different kinds of organisations – looser, perhaps more temporary). This raises questions of who to work with and engage with to achieve sustainable change through ‘nudge’ or any other available levers.

Discussing sport related interventions, **Kathleen Armour**, Professor of Education and Sport, University of Birmingham, raised the following points:

- There is currently great emphasis on sports as a way of reaching disengaged and disaffected young people. Extensive financial resources are being directed towards sports related programmes from both the public and private sectors. These programmes often have unrealistic goals (addressing youth crime, improving health etc) and a limited evidence base. They are based instead on a set of cultural norms that offer a very particular perspective on the ‘improving’ powers of sport – faith not evidence.

- An evaluation of a 5 year sports programme funded through an HSBC CSR initiative with the aim of improving the life circumstances of ‘disaffected’ young people highlighted:
 - that the best outcomes were achieved in cases where the target group already had some interest in the intervention, there was sustained engagement, and follow-up activity after the intervention.
 - the importance of context – skills/behaviours developed in a particular context are not necessarily transferrable to other contexts. Behaviour change interventions must adopt theories of change and learning that acknowledge the complexities of individual’s lives.

The discussion covered the following issues and questions:

- How to ensure independent evaluation of the many initiatives currently in place and address conflicts of interest arising from programmes being designed and evaluated by the same people or, at the other extreme, evaluations being carried out by individuals that fundamentally disagree with the basis of the intervention
- Challenges in evaluation – a limited focus on summative evaluation in the voluntary sector, limiting the space for learning and development during the life of the intervention; a tendency for programmes/organisations to claim superiority over other programmes/organisations with limited evidence to substantiate these claims - related to the lack of systematic comparisons of programmes/outcomes; political pressures and expectations; questions of fidelity of programmes; problems of attribution; the tyranny of ‘what works’ – slavishly replicating/promoting programmes that have been shown to work only in specific circumstances
- Health and sport – an area that the government is very interested in and one where there is some evidence behind the claims that are being made. A causal link has been shown to exist between sport and health benefits although there are still questions about which methodology/interventions work best. Some cautionary notes – evidence shows that that high level sport is very bad for your health in the long term, and that in order to make sport attractive to young people it needs to be delivered in bespoke ways; evidence also suggests that children give up sport in school as soon as they can partly because it is delivered on a ‘factory’ model.
- Challenges of determining the costs of behaviour change interventions and the costs-benefits of services forgone - challenges linked e.g. to the long delay between investment and return, and the fact that the investor is not necessarily the beneficiary. An economic model used in America in thinking about costs-benefits is currently being adapted for the UK context by the Social Research Unit.

- The need to embed organisational learning within both funding organisations and delivery organisations, to change attitudes towards frontline workers experimenting and taking risks, and to encourage open and constructive discussions of ‘failure’. Action research is one possible (though resource intensive) way of doing this.

The discussion was summarised by Kathryn Ecclestone who highlighted a number of issues that may need to be explored further by the Commission:

- The value of translating complex behaviours/attributes into skills that can be taught and measured
- Who decides what behaviour is to be changed, for whom, and how to do it?
- Questions of evaluation - who evaluates? What vested interests exist? Who decides? How is the evidence used?
- How to avoid the risk of policy amnesia – acknowledging the importance of learning from what has gone before and what is relevant from other contexts

Session Two: Commissioners’ Select Committee

Commissioners questioned invited witnesses on the potential and limitations of interventions to change behaviour, and the boundaries between public services, local communities, and the individual. The session focused on the following issues:

- Whose behaviour needs to change? Are there particular target groups amongst young people? How are they selected?
- What are the respective roles of family, school, local services, community and individuals in changing behaviour in different areas?
- How far do interventions reflect attempts at ‘social engineering’? Are ideas about social engineering changing in the ‘big society’?
- What do young citizens think about appropriate ways to change their behaviour in different areas?
- How can young citizens be involved in interventions and activities that are designed to change their behaviour? What tools, training and/or resources do they need?
- What does investment in behaviour change cost? How can its impact be assessed?

Witness 1: Peter Davies, Professor of Education Policy, University of Birmingham

Key points from opening statement:

- 'Big Society' proposes a shift from bureaucracy to social networks distinguishing it from New Labour's market focused policies. In this context behaviour change is one lever by which individuals' dispositions and actions can be re-orientated towards working in and through social networks. At an individual level this entails individuals internalising externalities – actions create benefits for others - to motivate participation.
- Schools could/do have a role in changing students' behaviour such that they are more likely to internalise 'Big Society' principles. There is some evidence that they can make these changes, not through 'nudging' or behavioural psychology but through a radical restructuring of how individuals see the world which affects how they might act. This is about securing cognitive change. The process of making these changes does not constitute a moral dilemma – the moral questions arise in connection with what kind of changed world view is being sought.
- Education can change behaviours but there is very limited evidence about whether it can change aspirations to societal position, e.g. New Zealand study of interventions encouraging aspiration to running a business. This found that the interventions had limited effect and more interestingly that aspirations towards future employment in business or social enterprise were gendered. There was evidence that 6th formers' espoused motivations are translated into action. So schools matter but do not override embedded aspirations. This could have implications for likely recruits to the 'Big Society' agenda.
- There are important questions of cost and value that need to be considered when using limited/scarcely resources. Often we can use the same resources in different ways but we do not consider this as we are attracted by the policy fashion. A key question is how do we decide what the curriculum is as it is this that reflects what we consider to be of value. There is also the need to decide whether or not schools are places that do engage in activities beyond the curriculum.

Issues raised in questioning and discussion:

- In a context of reducing public service provision and a focus on alternative forms of provision what interventions may work at the cognitive level to facilitate long term change that can 'grow' an alternative way of seeing the world? Possibilities include peer to peer education in schools.
- It is important to acknowledge the scale of cognitive change that might be needed against what might be achievable in a given context e.g. school. Offering school

children insights into how prices work may involve a relatively small change. Offering children a way of thinking about road pricing in the context of developing alternative transport policies requires a more profound change and involves considering the issue in the round and the individual thinking about themselves, their interests, emotions and how they are positioned on an issue. This is not something that is/can be done well in a school context.

Witness 2: Tiger de Souza, Evaluation & Projects manager, 'v'

Key points from opening statement:

- Traditional approaches to volunteering over the past 10 years have prioritised deputising the willing as a quick win. To actually generate behaviour change and realise the ambitions of the big society, focus needs to be more aligned at engaging the hard to reach. V works on the basis that there are four audiences for its activities: the uninterested, the indifferent, considerers and the converted. V works with the 'indifferent' – the rationale being that if they can be successfully engaged, volunteering can be made to appear as a norm and thereby change the opinions of the 'uninterested'.
- The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) carried out more than 2000 interviews, conducted earlier this year, with adults and young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) or with recent experience of being NEET. The data suggests that:
 - **Motivation is key to shaping the curriculum** – Young and adult NEETS have a wide range of interests and passions. Providers need to take time to find out what people want to learn and to have the flexibility to provide a range of opportunities to engage them.
 - **The NEET label masks a wide range of diversity** – Many learners face multiple disadvantages and therefore require extensive support and encouragement to successfully take part. There is a need to take a multidisciplinary approach to engaging young people and enabling them to succeed. Long term individually tailored approaches are required.
 - **Schools can damage your learning health** – past experience of learning has a significant impact on current and future learning. There were mixed experiences of learning in the sample – negative effects in relation to bullying, getting in with the wrong crowd, poor relationships with teachers, school perceived as boring or irrelevant, non-attendance, suspensions or expulsions.

- A culture shift is needed to take a long term approach (challenges of influence through family and/or school, especially for disadvantaged young people) to transform the current generation
 - The 'Giving' Green Paper has a strong focus on community but no clear definition. It infers a geographical description which, particularly in relation to young people, is an antiquated perception.
 - Citizenship survey statistics since 2001 show a plateau then decline in volunteering participation. There is no method of knowing whether this would have happened in the absence of volunteering investment or if the decline would have been sharper without it.
 - Efforts at macro level nudging seem to have been unsuccessful based on statistics, especially as there has been a marked growth in brand awareness of v.
 - An individual locally driven engagement approach is most effective, but this needs to be delivered through a national framework ensuring consistency of delivery and clear strategic objectives. V would argue a greater penetration through a systematic approach (vinvolved) compared with more ad-hoc provision (Millennium Volunteers)
 - Individual approach to supporting young people requires that they: feel connected to society; can identify a cause; are empowered to take action
- Youth Voice **www.bigsocietysbigmouth.org** - Young people are currently using avenues to vent frustration but do not see themselves as having responsibility for solutions. Key challenges are cuts to: EMA, tuition fees, education funding, volunteer infrastructure.
- Subjective vs. Objective assessments: Current v evaluation based on perceptions of young volunteers, looking to establish more objective measures of impact. Capabilities research with Demos is a sound starting point. Capabilities research could transform v approach to impact measurement.
- Data is best captured on an individual basis. Findings suggest that young people felt more confident, motivated, willing to try new things, had something to look forward to, were part of their local community as being direct results of their volunteering experience – these results are particularly interesting in relation to young people who were NEET at point of starting their volunteering.

- Vs current infrastructure has inspired over half a million to volunteer but it is being systematically dismantled. There is an important role for Local Government to sustain the skills, expertise, networks and knowledge of those local organisations

Issues raised in questioning and discussion:

- A distinction can be made between interventions with purist conceptualizations of volunteering (giving of one's time freely) and others that might include social action undertaken with a degree of coercion e.g. as a requirement of a HE course. The latter have value in exposing young people to activities they might not have otherwise considered.
- The definition of 'volunteering' should not be limited to that which takes place in organisational settings. Programmes to encourage and support young people to establish their own voluntary initiatives have been shown to work best for young people with experience of volunteering/social action whereas individuals that are new to it tend to need institutional/organisational support.
- How explicit can organisations be about the thinking processes behind their behaviour change interventions?
- Peer education is a particularly effective approach in behaviour change interventions for young people.
- What value and ethical judgments arise in relation to providing support for initiatives established by young people with extreme views and/or those encouraging political action? How can the learning benefit of taking dissenting action be acknowledged? Should national organisations like V fund that kind of activity? V is currently prohibited from supporting political/religious activities.
- The infrastructure to support young people's voluntary action is not protected from public sector funding cuts and this is likely to truncate young people's ability to mobilize and take action on matters that are important to them.

Witness 3: Andrea Legal-Miller, Youth Council Development Manager, Lambeth Youth Council

Key points from opening statement:

- Lambeth Youth Council has been running for nine years based on an ethos of 'by young people, for young people'. There are three projects currently running – Peer Education, Peer Inspection, and Youth Mayor.

- There is great value in engaging parents in ways that enable them to contribute towards the desired outcomes of interventions for young people
- Peer education benefits not only the target group but also/mainly the peer educators. Benefits are not only from technical expertise in relation to health but also from changing attitudes to health and providing peer support to change behaviours.
- Peer inspections – e.g. local youth clubs. It is important that young people receive timely feedback on the activities/interventions in which they are engaged
- The Youth Mayor is elected in competitive election and has budget of £25k to which young people can bid. Linked to youth parliament and wider range of youth representatives in borough.

Issues raised in questioning and discussion:

- The value and difficulties of drawing on the successes and failures of previous interventions in the design and development of new initiatives.
- Is there a danger of youth programmes focusing narrowly on specific ‘youth issues’ without making connections between different issues and considering broader social questions? In some cases the specific focus is driven by funders.
- Indicators of success – a distinction can exist between official indicators/measures that are linked directly to the aims of the projects and others that are identified by project staff e.g. the length of time young people stay with the projects; whether young people return after periods of absence e.g. after going away to study; personal growth amongst the young people working on the projects
- The importance of having an institutional infrastructure to support young people’s social action
- How to engage diverse groups of young people in behaviour change interventions

Session Three: Themed Workshops

The final session of the workshop heard three presentations of practical case examples of behaviour change, linked to the Commission’s policy areas - health, housing and leisure. Presenters described their work with reference to the following questions:

- What factors make young people feel responsible for themselves, their communities and their services?

- What kinds of organisations work best in achieving outcomes with young people?
- How are young people involved? What tools, training and/or resources do they need?
- What ideas about changing behaviour implicitly, or explicitly, inform the work of these organisations?
- How have professionals had to change their ways of working? What tools, training and/or resources are needed?
- How transferable are these initiatives/services?

Presentation 1: National Youth Reference Group (NYRG)

Members of the National Youth Reference Group spoke to the attached presentation, the key points of which were that:

- Independence is key to making young people feel responsible
- Involvement generates responsibility providing it is meaningful
- Service organisations that ‘work’ for young people are those which:
 - Construct individual relationships
 - Help you achieve what you need
 - Offer confidentiality
 - Provide funding for people to support themselves
 - Help develop citizenship
 - Enable young people to express themselves in different ways
- How to get young people involved:
 - Develop mechanisms for young people where they have ‘voice’ and can advocate for change
 - Enable them to train others
 - Employ staff with the right skills to work with young people
 - Provide different kinds of opportunities for involvement
 - Create a relaxed and welcoming environment
- Changing young people’s behaviour:
 - Adapt any intervention to the environment young people are in
 - Learn from mistakes and strive for improvement
 - ‘Every day is a school day’ – always something to learn

- Changing professionals' behaviour:
 - Draw on new technologies to interact with young people
 - Involve, listen and respect young people as users/citizens
 - Focus on creativity
- Shaping good services:
 - Share good practice
 - Invest in the person not the eservice
 - Always evaluate what you are doing

The discussion covered the following issues:

- The importance of networks and organisations that support action by young people. Not all young people will need the support but it is useful for them to know that the support exists and, more specifically, that there are organisations providing specialist services to meet individual needs.
- The definition and use of the term 'vulnerable' - used by the young people to mean 'not in familiar territory', 'unsure', 'unstable'. Changes in society have exposed certain groups of people (e.g. those under 16 and the elderly) to new risks. It was noted that the meaning of the term will vary in different contexts and that the label 'vulnerable person' is sometimes imposed on individuals by service providers.
- There are many young people who are willing to engage in shaping and delivering services if they are given the opportunity. 'Partnerships' that engage the expertise, experience and knowledge of professionals *and* of young people are key.
- The 'Big Society' should mean more of a role for voluntary sector action. It is important that this not restricted by financial cuts in the public sector; efforts to reduce spending should focus on cutting back restrictive bureaucratic processes.
- The importance of using a wide range of channels (e.g. social media, schools, youth clubs) to engage young people
- Young people like to see the impact of their involvement. Failure to see timely impact negatively influences the likelihood of further engagement.

Presentation 2: Charlotte Slater, Operations Director, Moo Moo Youth Marketing (MMYM)

The key points of the presentation were:

- Peer education has proved to be an effective tool in MMYM behaviour change interventions for young people. Other tools used by MMYM include 'guerrilla marketing', 'gimmicks' and social media.
- It is important that behaviour change interventions carry positive messages as opposed to putting across a barrage of negative messages with a list of behaviours to be avoided
- Constant consultation with the target group in designing and developing behaviour change interventions is essential for their long term success
- MMYM experience suggests that it is often more challenging to engage young males in sexual health campaigns than it is to engage young females
- Group mentality/dynamics within the target group can significantly influence the success or otherwise of behaviour change interventions. Such interventions benefit greatly from engaging and gaining the support of key figures within the groups.
- Incentives can be an effective tool in encouraging certain types of behaviours e.g. behaviour that involves a single action such as taking a Chlamydia test
- There is great value in making interventions for young people interactive, informal, and fun. It important that they are designed to attract and maintain the young people's interest.
- Peer educators and other frontline staff must be an integral part of the intervention – they must be actively involved in design and kept fully informed about the intervention as a whole (including its impact).

Presentation 3: Ben Kyneswood, community radio worker and community education tutor for young people / doctoral researcher, Third Sector Research Centre.

- Volunteering in community radio has tended to focus on getting people on to training courses. This is not really what it is about – what participants value is peer learning – getting to produce a programme on your first day as a volunteer, working in a team and managing real output. *There is an issue here about the role of funding and what public funding supports is often not what is required.*

- Young people are capable of effectively managing their own volunteering experiences and programmes if they are given the opportunity and the space to do so (community radio vols. 14-18 years).
- Behaviour change interventions need to acknowledge and take into consideration the myriad of (often interconnected and complex) decisions that individuals face and manage on a day-to-day basis

The discussion that followed presentations 2 and 3 covered the issues below:

- Barriers to young people participating include: reputation amongst peers; obstacles put in place by gatekeeper institutions such as schools; physical environments that are not 'young people friendly'; token/partial participation that does not give them room to genuinely influence the process
- How to manage a balance between giving young people freedom/independence and responsibility on the one hand and, on the other hand, limit irresponsible behaviours (based e.g. on a limited understanding of potential consequences). Trust is key.
- Questions of representativeness in young people's participation – whose voices are being heard and who do they represent? Which voices are not being heard? We need to be clear that young people participating in an initiative are not necessarily representing any other (group of) young people. Perhaps it is enough that each young person participating is bringing their particular perspective to the debate.
- How to scale up / replicate examples of good practice e.g. of behaviour change and participation. A supportive infrastructure is key.

Birmingham Policy Commission Workshop: Changing Citizens' Behaviour

17 February 2011

Workshop participants

COMMISSIONERS

Name	Organisation
Pete Alcock	Professor of Social Policy and Administration, University of Birmingham; Director of Third Sector Research Centre
Derrick Anderson	Chief Executive, Lambeth Council
Tony Bovaird	Professor of Public Management and Policy, University of Birmingham
Deborah Cadman (Chair)	Chief Executive, East of England Development Agency
Kathryn Ecclestone	Professor of Education and Social Inclusion, University of Birmingham
Jane Slowey	Chief Executive, Foyer Federation

INVITED GUESTS

	Young people from the National Youth Reference Group (NYRG)
Kathleen Armour	Professor of Education and Sport, University of Birmingham
James Arthur	Professor of Education and Citizenship, University of Birmingham; Director of Citzed and Learning for Life
James Blake	Chief Policy and Partnership Officer, St Albans City and District Council
Peter Davies	Professor of Education Policy, University of Birmingham
Stuart Derbyshire	Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of Birmingham
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