

An evaluation of two initiatives to reward young people

Julia Hirst, Eleanor Formby, Sadie Parr, Judy Nixon and Caroline Hunter with John Flint

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This study examines two pilot schemes in Bradford and York designed to increase young people's self esteem and stimulate a greater appreciation of the positive contribution they can make to their communities.

The two schemes rewarded young people for positive behaviour and taking part in practical community-based activities. The context for the schemes was one of intergenerational tensions, with incidences, or perceptions, of anti-social behaviour a concern for residents.

This report:

- analyses a range of qualitative and quantitative data, including a literature review
- presents the findings of a 20-month evaluation of the two schemes
- looks at how the two schemes were shaped by their different local contexts
- outlines some key questions and provides checklists for groups and agencies thinking of setting up a reward scheme for young people.



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1 Introduction

As concern about anti-social behaviour (ASB) has grown, so too has the perception that it is young people who are responsible for a significant proportion of incidents. In this context, concern has been raised about the extent to which current anti-social behaviour discourses problematise young people as the major source of disorder which threatens communities. By contrast, this evaluation considers two schemes which have sought to reward positive behaviour by young people in the community.

The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) in York has been concerned to explore methods which both reduce young people's involvement in anti-social behaviour and stimulate growth in tolerance towards young people and their preferred activities. In 2004, JRHT therefore devised a project to reward young people for positive behaviour and making a practical contribution to their community. The basic framework of the scheme is that young people collect 'points', through activities such as dog walking, litter collecting and helping out at community events, which they accrue to claim rewards, for example meals out and trips to the cinema and visitor attractions. It was launched in October 2004 and the scheme's first members named the scheme HOTEY – 'Helping Others to Enjoy Yourself' (referred to in this report as 'the York scheme'). In September the following year, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation provided funding for Royds Community Association (a community-led social enterprise) in Wyke, South Bradford, to develop Positive Youth Action (PYA), a reward scheme operating on similar principles to the York scheme and active in three housing estates (Delph Hill, St Mary's and Shirley Manor) ('the Bradford scheme').

Both schemes identified the following aims for their projects:

- stimulating a greater appreciation of the positive contribution young people can make
- improving young people's self-image through rewarding positive behaviour
- reducing young people's involvement in anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance
- increasing tolerance amongst adults of the visible presence of young people in the community.

The Bradford scheme had the additional aim of:

- increasing young people's awareness of, and involvement in, community and environmental activities, specifically to address concerns highlighted through the local Neighbourhood Action Planning (NAP) process.

The evaluation

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) commissioned an evaluation of the York scheme in January 2005. In May 2005, following the set-up of the Bradford scheme, the evaluation was extended to include both schemes, in order to assess the success or otherwise of schemes operating in very different socio-economic contexts. The evaluation lasted for a 20-month period during which the development and progress of both projects were tracked to examine how the two schemes, ostensibly with the same remit, have been shaped by their different local contexts. This report is based on an analysis of a range of qualitative and quantitative data sources and presents the final evaluation findings.

The research aimed to provide an evaluation of local views on young people and the perceived problems of youth nuisance, and assess the short-term direct and indirect impact of the schemes. The research specification identified a number of primary objectives and related issues to be addressed by the study:

- 1 To describe how the schemes worked in terms of the type and numbers of people involved (both adult supervisor volunteers and young participants), tasks undertaken, rewards claimed, etc.
- 2 To outline young people's perceptions of the benefits of taking part in the scheme and the impact the scheme had on their self-image and behaviour.
- 3 To map community perceptions of young people and investigate whether the scheme has stimulated a growth in tolerance towards young people and their preferred activities.

To meet the aims and objectives set out above, the evaluation drew on a range of methods (see Table 1). Data were collected on the reward schemes themselves, including: the origins, design and delivery of the two reward schemes; young people's experiences of being involved in the respective schemes; and perceptions of the reward schemes from those not involved in them. Additional data were also collected from adult supervisor volunteers, project workers and local residents.

Table 1 Data collection methods

Method	Number of interviews/ groups/meetings	Total individuals involved
Consultation and mapping exercise on existing reward schemes (virtual, telephone discussions and visits)	N/A	N/A
Critical review of literature on reward schemes and policy developments on young people, community and ASB	N/A	N/A
Individual, group and/or telephone interviews and meeting observations with key staff and stakeholders in New Earswick (York scheme)	12	11
Individual, group and/or telephone interviews and meeting observations with key staff and stakeholders in Wyke (Bradford scheme)	10	8
Participatory group research activities with York members	3	12
Focus groups with Bradford members	3	26
Focus groups with non-participants in both scheme areas	3	35
Surveys of residents' experiences and views	N/A	N/A

Residents' views were primarily collected through a survey, which was distributed by the young people themselves in each area. While a relatively good response rate of 35 per cent was achieved in New Earswick, in Wyke only an 8 per cent response rate was achieved and we have therefore been very cautious in including analysis of these responses in the evaluation.¹

At the outset of the evaluation, we intended to carry out an 'impact analysis' of the York scheme. However, it has not been possible for us to evaluate the short-term direct and indirect impact of the York scheme since the scheme has not been operational to a degree that could manifest any measurable changes. Resources were therefore redirected to non-participants living in New Earswick. Despite limitations in the findings on the specifics of the York scheme, the total data set is no less than that for Bradford, and the extensive disclosures of young people in the non-member focus groups and the higher response rate for the survey of residents' views in New Earswick make up for deficits in data on the York scheme itself. In effect then, and for reasons beyond our control, the evaluation of York tells us more about the views of non-participants and the context for the implementation of the scheme than about the impact on members themselves (for a more detailed discussion of the methodology see the Appendix).

Structure of the report

- Chapter 2 is a literature review on the use of reward schemes in promoting civil renewal and strong communities, with a particular focus on the use of incentives initiatives for young people.
- Chapter 3 provides a basic description of the two areas and the operation of the schemes.
- Chapter 4 explores local contextual factors and perceptions of community members in each scheme area, and how they impacted on setting up and running the schemes.
- Chapter 5 offers an evaluation of the two schemes and identifies particular factors which impacted on their development.
- Chapter 6 offers some conclusions on the success of each scheme, and positions these in light of current developments and reward schemes in the UK.
- Chapter 7 outlines some key questions and checklists for groups and agencies thinking of setting up a reward scheme for young people.

2 Reward schemes, young people and community renewal: a literature review

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the use of reward schemes in promoting civil renewal and strong communities, with a particular focus on the use of incentive initiatives for young people. The chapter begins by placing such initiatives within a wider policy framework that emphasises social inclusion, active citizenship and respectful behaviour, and continues by exploring the key rationales and aims of reward schemes. Different models for reward schemes are set out and evidence about their impacts and effectiveness is presented. The chapter concludes by focusing on the use of reward schemes for young people in a range of contexts.

The policy context

There are a number of key government rationales and policy initiatives that provide the contextual framework within which the use of reward schemes are proliferating in the UK.

The conceptual understanding of social exclusion

Policy responses to the causes of deprivation and neighbourhood decline are underpinned by the concept of social exclusion (see Levitas, 1998). The contemporary understanding of social exclusion has broadened the focus from individualised material poverty to include recognition that cultural and social processes are important factors in sustaining the disadvantage experienced by individuals and neighbourhoods. This has resulted in neighbourhood renewal and other urban policy strategies increasingly emphasising the centrality of both individuals' beliefs, values and behaviour and the community dynamics that exist in deprived neighbourhoods (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001).

The importance of community and social capital

This understanding of the causes of social exclusion leads to the identification of community as both the location and process for achieving neighbourhood renewal (Rose, 2001). This is evident in the continuing area-based focus of regeneration policy in the UK in which (spatially defined) communities are equated with local neighbourhoods and these neighbourhoods are being given increasing powers and opportunities to determine their own opportunities and outcomes in the quest for sustainable communities (ODPM, 2005). As well as local communities being the site for neighbourhood renewal, the processes of community are understood to be essential to tackling social problems, and in particular crime and anti-social behaviour, with 'appeals to communities' to become actively involved in addressing these issues dating back to the 1980s (Crawford, 1997).

Active citizenship, civil renewal and respect

Government policies have long promoted active self-government and the moral duties of individual citizens to behave responsibly, to be self-dependent and to proactively contribute to tackling social problems (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Rose, 2001). Three key dimensions of these policies are relevant here. First, since the late 1980s Government has emphasised the need for active citizenship. Across a range of policy areas including regeneration, housing, health, education and crime, opportunities have been created for citizens to influence decision making. Accompanying these developments has been an appeal for citizens to take a more active role in civil society and to participate in policy delivery processes, for example through tenant participation and Neighbourhood Watch schemes. This is linked to a second element which is the widespread perception that civil society is in need of renewal, based on the idea that neighbourliness, volunteering, membership of civic organisations and participation in political processes are in decline. The establishment of both the Active Citizenship and Civil Renewal Units by the Government reflects its support for increasing the levels of social and civic engagement amongst citizens. The Millennium Volunteers programme has seen 225,000 young people participating in a range of community-focused activities. In addition, the Respect Action Plan (Respect Task Force, 2006) announced that the Government intends to establish a national youth volunteering service which aims to increase the numbers of young people volunteering by one million in the next five years.

These developments illustrate that reward schemes are developing within a wider government promotion of volunteering amongst the population, building on the recommendations of the Russell Commission. It should be noted that the Government has focused its promotion of volunteering on young people and volunteers from a disadvantaged background (Respect Task Force, 2006) and this raises important issues about how volunteering as a required 'norm' of behaviour occurs amongst adult and more affluent populations. For example, 45 per cent of young people aged 16–24 participate at least once a month in informal volunteering – the highest level for any age group (Respect Task Force, 2006) – although young people may be under-represented in more formalised volunteering and officially recognised social capital-generating activities (Fahmy, 2004).

This is linked to a third element which has achieved prominence in recent years: the need for a culture of respect amongst citizens and within communities. Again, this is based on a belief that contemporary 'standards' of behaviour have deteriorated. This is most evident in the focus on tackling anti-social behaviour since 1997, but the more recent respect agenda has extended these debates into a wider 'politics of behaviour' (Field, 2003) that includes moral and ethical assessments of behaviour and the Government's call for enhanced levels of politeness, manners and consideration of others (Respect Task Force, 2006). Much of this debate has focused on the alleged disrespectful behaviour of young people, and especially groups of young people, in public spaces and the impact of this behaviour, particularly upon older people.

Reward schemes for young people that aim to promote and indeed recognise their positive contributions to local communities may be located within each of these policy key dimensions set out above.

The rationales of reward schemes and changing behaviour

Reward schemes are regarded as a mechanism for bringing about changes in individuals' behaviour through providing tangible incentives for their efforts. Despite the continuing appeals in political speeches and policy documents for active citizenship, volunteering and civil renewal and the calls for greater respect in local communities, as Holdsworth and Boyle (2004) point out, good behaviour that is inconvenient, unnoticed or unrewarded is unlikely to be successfully reinforced simply by rhetoric.

Key principles

Before examining specific reward schemes in more detail, there is a need to assess what the rationales and aims of these schemes are and how they are envisaged as a mechanism for changing individuals' behaviour. Reward schemes involve the formal and public recognition of good behaviour (Anti-Bullying Network, 2006). A number of key principles underpinning reward schemes may be identified, and are summarised in Box 1.

Box 1 Key principles of reward schemes

The key principles of reward schemes are based upon:

- the rational choice of individuals and ability to voluntarily change their behaviour
- a range of incentives which may influence behaviour
- a contract-based understanding of rights and responsibilities.

First, and importantly in the context of anti-social behaviour and young people, reward schemes are based on the assumption that individuals have the capacity to change their behaviour voluntarily and that they will respond rationally to maximise their self-interest (which may be very widely defined). For example, the recent study by Bastow *et al.* (2006) into the role of incentives in promoting civil renewal utilised a rational interests and beliefs approach. The study found that rewards and incentive schemes may have a positive impact in creating inducements for people to actively co-operate with their neighbours rather than being apathetic or disengaged, and that such schemes could strengthen incentives for people to behave co-operatively rather than in anti-social ways, especially if it is clear that enough other people are co-operating to maintain social norms and cohesion. However, the study authors point out the complexity of individuals' motivations and actions, which are dependent on the levels of rewards on offer, and also that people tend to act in co-operative and altruistic ways far more than rational choice models would suggest.

This emphasis on rational choice and the ability of individuals to voluntarily change their behaviour within reward schemes mirrors such assumptions in a number of other anti-social behaviour mechanisms including tenancy agreements, probationary tenancies and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. These are based on the belief that setting out clear incentives and/or sanctions will influence behaviour (see Crawford, 2003 for a fuller discussion). However, this understanding is particularly problematic

when applied to anti-social behaviour, which is often characterised by irrational conduct arising from a range of social, economic and psychological factors and/or substance misuse.

Second, reward schemes are based on the belief that providing a series of positive incentives will influence the behaviour of individuals and encourage them to respond in particular ways. The nature and level of rewards become important here. Evidence from time bank schemes (Seyfang, 2005) suggests that individuals do not need to be rewarded very much, but that recognition of their efforts is essential. Furthermore, individuals often do not use the credits for rewards they accumulate although they may well be motivated by the process of earning reward points (Holdsworth and Boyle, 2004). However, the types of rewards and recognition that will appeal to young people will differ from those that will appeal to adults, as will other forms of influence on their behaviour such as peer status and reputation.

Third, reward schemes are often premised on setting out clear expectations of required standards of behaviour. These emphasise the responsibilities as well as rights of individuals, and are used, for example, in good neighbour agreements and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour. However, these mechanisms also clearly set out the responsibilities of service providers and agencies, based on recognition that young people and others may require additional support to achieve the required forms of behaviour. In other words, simply providing rewards and/or sanctions will not be sufficient by themselves to change behaviour. In evaluating individual reward scheme initiatives, there is a need therefore to assess the underpinning rationales about their purpose and likely effectiveness.

Key variations

The various models of rewards and incentive schemes operating in the UK may be based on similar key assumptions, as set out in the previous section, but they vary significantly. The characteristics of various schemes are set out in the following sections, but there are a number of core basic variations that have important implications for how reward schemes operate. These are set out in Box 2.

Box 2 Key variations in the application of reward schemes

- The forms of behaviour they are seeking to influence.
- They may be universal or targeted at specific populations or individuals.
- They may or may not be linked to a series of penalties as well as rewards.
- The rewards may be individual or collective.
- They may either reward a more 'passive' desistance from unwanted behaviour or require a proactive demonstration of required behaviour.

Universal or targeted

Reward schemes attempt to address a range of behaviours relating to health, education, environmental sustainability, community participation and anti-social behaviour. Their specific aims and operation will vary depending both on what aspects of behaviour are being addressed and how appropriate behaviour is defined and assessed.

Reward schemes may be universal or targeted at specific populations and individuals. Although most of the current reward schemes operate in a small geographical area targeting specific issues or groups (Holdsworth and Boyle, 2004), they may have a universal application. By universal, we mean that all members of a given population (for example, pupils in a school) are eligible for incentives and have their behaviour assessed and rewarded accordingly. School discipline systems are a good example of this (see below). Alternatively, reward schemes may apply to selected individuals (for example, pupils with poor school attendance records) or social housing tenants, or young people in a particular locality. The extent of universality or selectiveness will also depend on whether individuals are automatically included in rewards systems (i.e. in school settings) or have to proactively join, for example in many community-based reward schemes for young people or tenant reward schemes. The extent to which schemes are universal or targeted has important consequences for how they are perceived. If they are universal, they provide a degree of equality and fairness, if they are applied consistently, but the consequences of not qualifying for rewards may be more significant for the affected minority. On the other hand, where they are targeted they may be perceived as being unjustifiably applied to some groups (young people or social housing tenants) and not to others (adults or owner-occupiers), which may cause resentment amongst both targeted and non-targeted parties.

Types of rewards

Reward schemes are sometimes based entirely on ‘positive’ incentives. That is, there is no penalty for not meeting behaviour that meets criteria for rewards other than not receiving the rewards. Of course, over time this may become perceived as a penalty. In other reward schemes such as school discipline initiatives, rewards may form part of a wider framework of sanctions, and the reward schemes emerging in social housing management may be a further illustration of this. In these cases the balance and relationship between rewards and sanctions need to be considered carefully.

The form that rewards take varies between schemes (see below) but include rewards given both to individuals and collectively to groups. Where collective rewards are given, this may be seen to reinforce notions of community cohesion, and many reward schemes operated by social landlords provide tenants with options of both personal and community benefits.

A final, but very important, differentiation that may be made between reward schemes is the extent to which they provide rewards for ‘passive’ rule following or offer incentives for proactive conduct such as volunteering. In many cases, schemes may provide incentives for both. Most schemes, such as school discipline systems and tenant reward schemes, reward individuals for simply following rules and requirements. However, in some other schemes criteria for rewards include demonstrating significant contributions to local communities. The point here is that careful consideration needs to be given to what individuals are being rewarded for, especially young people. As an example, should young people be required to undertake levels of volunteering and environmental improvement activities to gain rewards and recognition where such acts of citizenship are not common amongst adult members of their community? There is therefore a need to explore how citizenship and required forms of behaviour are constructed and defined in particular local contexts and the extent to which this will be applied differentially to specific social groups.

Examples and models of reward schemes

This section provides examples and models of the main types of reward schemes that exist in the UK. These schemes are often aimed at adults, although they may include children and young people. While the next section looks at reward schemes specifically for young people, an examination of initiatives for adults provides some important lessons and raises several key issues.

Probably the most common and visible form of reward schemes in the UK are the loyalty card systems operated by major retailers such as Tesco and Sainsbury's and airlines that are used to stimulate consumer behaviour. These schemes reward consumers for their loyalty to a particular company or brand and provide incentives for additional purchasing through offering discounts and vouchers for a range of products and activities. Increasingly, major retailers are combining to provide a single loyalty card that offers a range of rewards across their products and services. While there are almost no limiting criteria for membership of these schemes (i.e. an individual simply registers for the scheme with no assessment of their personal circumstances), the ability to access the rewards arising from these schemes is dependent on having sufficient income to make the required amount of purchases and being able to physically access participating branches. These 'hidden' eligibility criteria should be borne in mind in evaluating access to other seemingly open-to-all reward schemes.

An increasing number of local authorities are utilising some form of smart card that provides discounts to council facilities and may include some discounts to partner companies, but these are not strictly reward schemes, in that eligibility is not based on assessments of behaviour beyond being a council tax payer.

Other examples of reward schemes include the NU Spaar-pas Card in the Netherlands that rewards individuals for their efforts to consume goods in a more sustainable way, and there are discussions about the merits of introducing such a scheme in the UK. The London boroughs of Brent and Lambeth have piloted rewarding households with £10 for undertaking a required amount of recycling (Holdsworth and Boyle, 2004). However, although rates of participation in the schemes grew and the amount of material recycled increased, the fact that only one in five households in Brent and one in ten in Lambeth eventually qualified for the £10 incentive is an important reminder that cash or other incentives may not persuade large majorities of individuals to change their behaviour. In Angell Town estate in Brixton, London, residents were rewarded for community activities by receiving credits for IT training in another variation of an incentive scheme.

A recent study of three incentive schemes (Bastow *et al.*, 2006) found that incentive schemes had modest and narrowly targeted ambitions, and that awareness of the schemes was often low. However, residents valued the schemes for a range of reasons including personal benefit, clarity in rule setting, and the provision of evidence that local authorities are serious about tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour. Although incentive schemes only appealed to a minority of residents compared to other favoured forms of intervention, they did appeal to certain groups of individuals who may not be affected by other measures.

Many of the existing studies highlight the importance of the types of rewards provided and the extent to which these are sustainable and contribute to other policy aims. For instance, the Angell Town scheme mentioned above sought to combine benefits to local communities arising from volunteering activities with enhanced skills for individuals which may lead to improved employment rates with subsequent economic and social benefits. There is also a need to maximise the range of rewards available and to utilise the available capacity and resources of partner organisations. For example, a scheme in a Brazilian city rewarded recycling activity by enabling discounted access to public transport at off-peak times and thereby combining promotion of two forms of environmentally sustainable behaviour (see Holdsworth and Boyle, 2004).

Tenant reward schemes

In the public policy field, the two most common forms of reward scheme are to be found in education and social housing. Behavioural rewards and incentive schemes are widely used in schools and are discussed in the following section. An increasing number of local authorities and registered social landlords are introducing tenant reward schemes. These schemes provide rewards to tenants including rent discounts, accelerated repair and maintenance services, insurance discounts, shopping and leisure vouchers, and entries into competitions. Tenants also have the opportunity to utilise their rewards for community benefits, and typically landlords will double their contribution where tenants use this option. In order to be eligible for these rewards, tenants have to meet a range of criteria, the most common being not having rent arrears, paying rent on time and not engaging in anti-social behaviour, although other required behaviour may include giving full notice on vacating a property and leaving a property in good order. The most prominent example of such a scheme is the Irewell Valley Housing Association 'Gold Service' scheme which has served as a prototype for a growing number of social landlords in the UK.

It should be noted that in line with the Government's attempts to increase and formalise the use of such schemes, the proposed Respect Housing Management Standard will require social landlords to 'reward responsibility by providing incentives for those who respect their neighbourhoods and community' (Respect Task Force, 2006, p. 27) so that the current voluntary and geographically varied coverage of reward schemes is likely to change towards universal provision amongst social landlords, at least in England and Wales.

There is an emerging literature on tenant reward schemes (Flint, 2004; Jacobs *et al.*, 2005) and some evaluations of specific schemes have been undertaken (see

Housing Corporation, 2001; ODS Ltd, 2005). These evaluations have reported some beneficial outcomes arising from tenant reward schemes, including improved rent collection levels, reduced anti-social behaviour, lower vacancy rates and increased tenant commitment to their property, neighbourhood and landlord. However, the literature also raises a number of key issues that are directly relevant to reward schemes aimed at young people. These include the following:

- The rationales and aims of tenant reward schemes vary. Often their main focus is to reward and recognise the positive behaviour of the majority of tenants rather than to seek to influence the behaviour of those engaged in anti-social behaviour.
- Tenant reward schemes are motivated as much by commercial goals of image and branding and increasing tenant 'loyalty' to landlords as by promoting communitarian endeavour or reducing anti-social behaviour.
- Tenant reward schemes will have no more than a marginal impact on those engaged in lower-level anti-social behaviour and are unlikely to have any significant impact on serious anti-social behaviour.
- Tenant reward schemes have been criticised for introducing two-tier services provision whereby some tenants receive enhanced services not available to others, which undermines notions of universality and equality of provision. This is likely to have the effect of further alienating the minority of tenants engaged in anti-social behaviour. Of course, landlords have not reduced services to ineligible tenants, and continue to attempt to meet minimum and above standards of housing management for all their tenants. It should also be noted that many landlords have attempted to maximise the opportunities for excluded tenants to gain or regain membership of the schemes. As with other anti-social behaviour measures in housing management, there are also concerns about the impacts on third parties such as tenants' children.
- Such schemes have also been criticised, particularly by tenant organisations, for being patronising, stigmatising social housing tenants as perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and for rewarding unjustifiably behaviour that is already required in tenancy agreements and should be expected as the 'norm' without recourse to additional incentives.
- These schemes require considerable cultural change within organisations and have significant resource implications, and their cost benefits have yet to be demonstrated conclusively.

Resident and neighbour awards

A growing number of local authorities and registered social landlords are introducing *award* schemes for good citizens or good neighbours. These should be differentiated from *reward* schemes as:

- They are given to individuals who have been through a nomination and judging process.
- They are given to individuals who have made an outstanding and proactive contribution to their local communities.
- Although there may be an element of financial or other reward, their main purpose is to publicly recognise the behaviour and contribution of these individuals.

Typically, individuals are nominated by their neighbours or others in a number of categories, for behaviour including:

- neighbourliness (for example, helping with shopping, taking neighbours to hospital appointments, etc.)
- caring for the local environment
- arranging and participating in community events and groups
- promoting good community relations
- championing a local community cause
- acts of bravery or kindness
- long-standing contributions to community organisations.

The recipients usually receive some form of reward (cash or shopping vouchers to the value of typically £50–250) in a well-publicised ceremony. There are two main purposes of these awards. First, they aim to recognise and show appreciation for outstanding acts of citizenship and neighbourliness and, second, they seek to promote and encourage similar behaviour amongst other residents. Examples of such schemes include The Forest of Dean Housing, Oxford Citizens Housing Association, Sunderland Housing Group, Raven Housing Trust, Hampshire County

Council Good Neighbour Awards and Aylesbury Vale District Council Volunteer of the Year Award. A number of these schemes, including those of Ardenglen Housing Association, Greenwich Council and Aylesbury District Council, have specific categories of awards for recognising the contribution of young people.

These local schemes are mirrored by the establishment of national award schemes, most obviously those aimed at individuals and community groups who have sought to tackle anti-social behaviour, for example the Taking a Stand Awards in England and Wales and the Standing Up to Anti-Social Behaviour Awards in Scotland. These schemes include categories for young people and the awards are financial sums that should be used on anti-social behaviour projects that bring tangible benefits to local neighbourhoods. Again, the awards are presented at heavily publicised ceremonies and combine recognition of the behaviour of individuals with the encouragement of similar behaviour in others.

While recognition of the outstanding contribution of individuals to local communities, particularly in relation to the personal bravery often required to address anti-social behaviour, may be appropriate, two broader issues for reward schemes are important. First, these awards are based on the outstanding contribution of individuals, based on their proactive engagement and substantial time commitments. This is different to reward schemes which provide incentives for adhering to norms of behaviour. There is a key issue then in how expected and normalised behaviour is defined and assessed. For example, for most tenant reward schemes a more passive adherence to paying rent regularly and desisting from anti-social behaviour is sufficient to receive rewards. However, in some other schemes, especially for young people, acts of citizenship including volunteering are required. Care needs to be taken in not blurring these differences, which may result in young people being required to demonstrate their citizenship through proactive community activities that are not required of the adult population. Second, and particularly with regard to anti-social behaviour, there is an issue about the extent to which citizens should be encouraged to informally intervene to tackle the problem as opposed to the appropriate action being undertaken by the police and other agencies.

Reward schemes for young people

There are increasing numbers of rewards and incentive schemes across the UK aimed at promoting positive behaviour amongst young people. The majority of reward schemes for young people have been established in the areas of education (including truancy), health and anti-social behaviour (EPPI, 2005). A recent review of the available evidence from the UK and abroad (EPPI, 2005) indicates that

despite a growing international evidence base there remains uncertainty about the effectiveness of such schemes and the mechanisms through which they may impact on young people's behaviour.

Schools

The most common forms of reward schemes for young people in the UK are those operated in schools (for a fuller discussion see Aubrey-Hopkins and James, 2002 and Munn, 1999). Such schemes should also be viewed within the context of the citizenship components of the curriculum and teaching of respect in the classroom (see Rohrer, 2006). Praise and reward systems in schools are based in behavioural psychology and an increasing number of commercial packages are available to promote good discipline and positive behaviour. These packages are based on the belief that children can choose how to behave and that schools can influence behaviour by setting out clear rules and explicitly specifying rewards and sanctions for adhering to or breaking rules (Anti-Bullying Network, 2006). As with the rationales for tenant reward schemes, many of the rewards systems in school are based on an understanding that formalised responses and disproportionate attention are given to bad behaviour and should be balanced by the need to recognise the good behaviour of most young people, most of the time (Anti-Bullying Network, 2006).

Individual schools operate different models, but the schemes usually involve praise cards or diaries and stickers that equate to points that are translated into certificates or awards, often based around awards ceremonies. Although the evidence suggests that praise and reward schemes can help establish a positive ethos in schools and improve behaviour, research has also identified a number of important issues including:

- the need for clear rules and specified rewards and sanctions
- the need for consistency in application in the use of rewards and sanctions
- the need for training and understanding amongst those operating such schemes
- ensuring that rewards are meaningful and deserved and do not become routine or meaningless
- avoiding rewards that provide perverse incentives (for example, rewarding good school attendance with trips away from school). (Adapted from Anti-Bullying Network, 2006)

Reward schemes are also targeted at particular pupils in schools, most commonly in relation to truancy. A study found that reward schemes were not in themselves effective in influencing behaviour, but required to be located within wider holistic approaches and, importantly for this study, needed an active commitment and support from parents – and to place some responsibility on pupils for managing their own behaviour (Hallam and Castle, 2001).

National reward schemes for young people

Community Merit Awards (CMA) are schemes funded by the Youth Justice Board and operating from within the Board's Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP). The 12 schemes are incentive-based and young people earn awards for work that benefits the community. The schemes aim to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour among 'high-risk' young people aged 13 to 16 in deprived neighbourhoods. Its aims are to:

- engage young people, identified as at risk by local YIPs, in activities that improve the visible local environment in the YIP neighbourhood to benefit the local community
- improve the self-worth and sense of community responsibility among participating young people
- reduce anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the YIP neighbourhood.

These have undergone a two-year evaluation, the findings of which have been published (Youth Justice Board, 2004). The evaluation found that CMA activities appear to be particularly effective in increasing the self-confidence of the young people involved, and in discussions with young people 76 per cent said they felt more a part of their community as a result of the CMA. Self-reporting evidence also indicated that the schemes are diverting participants from crime and anti-social behaviour: 58 per cent of the 50 participants surveyed say that they had been in trouble with the police before their involvement with the CMA scheme, and of this group 65 per cent said they were no longer getting into trouble, while another 21 per cent were getting into trouble less often. In addition to rewards gained from taking part in activities, young people have also gained other qualifications in the course of their CMA activities, including City & Guilds certificates, Awarding Board Consortium (ABC) Practical Skills certificates and the National Proficiency Tests Council (NPTC) Certificate in Skills in Working Life. Other young people have trained as soccer coaches and as peer educators on drug issues. The report concludes by suggesting that:

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The CMA has had a substantial impact on the lives of the young people who have participated in it; and delivered major benefits to the areas in which it has operated, in terms of reduced crime and integrating participants into the community. In the majority of cases, the activities themselves, and the impact they have made, have been highly visible in the communities in which the schemes are based.

(Youth Justice Board, 2004, p. 10)

There are also more than 50 reward schemes that are members of the Dreamscheme Network, first established on Sheffield's Flower Estate between 1995 and 1998. The Dreamscheme Network has evolved since then and in 1999 became a registered charity providing training, information, advice, guidance and support to help groups across the UK set up their own Dreamscheme. Individual Dreamschemes are self-funded and run by a range of organisations including housing associations, neighbourhood wardens, residents' associations, community safety units, regeneration groups and faith-based organisations.

A dreamscheme is community youth development based on a simple concept of WORK, POINTS and TRIPS. Young people are enabled to carry out community based work projects for which they earn points. These can then be exchanged for trips and activities of their choice. (www.dreamscheme.org.uk, 2005)

According to the Dreamscheme website, one of the key benefits achieved by Dreamschemes is a reduction of anti-social behaviour and improved relationships between local residents.

The Connexions card scheme was extended to national use in September 2003. The purpose of the scheme is to retain young people in education and training and to encourage voluntary activity in local communities (Holdsworth and Boyle, 2004). Young people are awarded points for attendance at educational institutions and/or undertaking positive activities such as visiting libraries and voluntary work. All young people aged 16–19 are eligible and there are currently over 400,000 cards issued with 18,000 learning centres involved. Cardholders access their points through a web-based facility that includes other services such as CV assistance and a free helpline. Rewards include discounted travel and school catering facilities. The aim is to make the scheme self-financing in the long term. The key lessons emerging from the Connexions scheme include the need to provide incentives for participation for all parties involved, and for the private sector sponsors who have appeared willing to become involved.

The Government's *Youth Matters* Green Paper and the Respect Action Plan have announced that a youth opportunity card will be piloted in selected areas. The cards will provide discounts on activities with accredited providers of sports, clubs and educational facilities and will be topped up by financial credits to encourage young people to take part in 'positive' activities in their spare time. Key features of the card are that it is universal, in that it will be made available to all young people in the pilot areas, that it will be based on losing rewards as well as gaining them (i.e. young people are automatically eligible but will have the card withdrawn in certain circumstances) and that assessments are directly linked to anti-social behaviour, with young people who behave anti-socially having their credits withdrawn.

In response to the Government's *Youth Matters* Green Paper, the Commission for Rural Communities (2005) identified a number of key issues, including the following:

- There is a danger that reward schemes will benefit those young people who are already motivated, involved in their communities and have access to good facilities and may not impact on isolated or disaffected young people.
- There is a need to involve a wide range of young people in the design and implementation of reward schemes.
- There is a need to provide interesting and meaningful volunteering opportunities in a variety of local contexts, including rural areas.
- There is a need to recognise the time commitments involved in volunteering and to overcome logistical barriers such as timing of activities and transport access.
- Rewards should be accessible to all (for example, internet-based services).

Examples of local reward schemes for young people

Most of the existing reward schemes for young people are small-scale and occur in small local areas. Two such schemes, which specifically seek to address anti-social behaviour amongst young people, are described here (Boxes 3 and 4). The key learning lessons from the case study of the Community Reward Scheme in Wornington Green (renewal.net, 2006) include the need to:

- ensure that young people understand the nature of the organisation/project and the work the organisation does

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- persuade young people that a scheme will help provide solutions to their problems and achieve their goals and is not simply another source of sanctions or punishment
- be honest and realistic with young people about their aims and to build up trust
- consult young people in designing reward schemes and involve them in continual decision making, which increases their sense of ownership and ensures that the scheme matches their particular needs
- plan ahead and attempt to secure longer-term funding
- maintain commitment over a period of time and recognise that working with excluded young people is often challenging.

Box 3 YP2-Clay, St Austell, Cornwall

The YP2-Clay voucher scheme in St Austell, Cornwall, was established as part of the Prince of Wales Rural Revival Initiative. The scheme provides vouchers to 13–14 year olds as incentives to encourage discussion, self-management and responsibility amongst young people. Young people are rewarded for volunteering their time for community groups, projects and events and have contributed in excess of 1,000 hours. The scheme is reported to have enhanced young people's skills of decision making, negotiation and communication and increased their self-esteem, self-confidence and social awareness of community issues. The scheme, which is supported by local schools and businesses, aims to encourage stronger links between adults and young people in local communities and has sought to increase the engagement of young people in their local areas. Feedback from schools and colleges has been very positive about the levels of commitment and citizenship demonstrated by participants.

(Adapted from Commission for Rural Communities, 2005)

Box 4 Community Reward Scheme for Young People, Wornington Green, London

The Community Reward Scheme for Young People in Wornington Green in West London, run by a detached youth project in Golborne, aims to tackle anti-social behaviour by offering incentives to young people to get involved in, and work for, their local communities. The scheme began in 2000. Participants perform voluntary activities such as gardening for elderly people, removing graffiti, or distributing Christmas presents to homeless people, and in return they receive rewards points that may be exchanged for educational activities or residential trips. The rationale of the scheme is to divert young people from anti-social behaviour, to reduce the fear of crime in the local community and to encourage volunteering activities for those aged under 25. The 30 current participants, aged between 13 and 19, work mainly in single-sex groups. The nature of the voluntary work, which includes ongoing activities and specific short-term projects, is identified through local residents surveys. The scheme is seeking to include work that can be accredited and contribute to young people's skills and has a link to the local Connexions centre. The scheme also includes a young mothers' reward scheme (up to age 35). The scheme is reported to have encouraged team working, skills sharing, self-discipline and positive behaviour. Participants are recruited through informal street work, drop-in sessions and referrals from agencies. The £110,000 scheme budget is provided by the Single Regeneration Budget and Kensington and Chelsea London Borough Council. The scheme is reported to have diverted some young people from offending, reduced fear of crime in the community and improved the local environment.

(Adapted from renewal.net, 2006)

Conclusions

This review of the literature on reward schemes reflects the fact that the majority of incentives initiatives are small-scale, involving limited numbers of people, and are in their early stages of implementation, making robust evaluation problematic. Reward schemes for young people are being utilised to address health, education, volunteering and anti-social behaviour. This chapter has identified a number of key dimensions of difference between reward schemes in terms of their aims and operation, which are likely to have a significant impact on their outcomes. These differences are set out in Box 5, although it should be noted that there may be considerable overlap across dimensions, which are not always mutually exclusive.

Box 5 Key dimensions of difference

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Recognising and rewarding existing behaviour | ■ Changing existing behaviour |
| ■ Rewarding the behaviour of the majority | ■ Changing the behaviour of the minority |
| ■ Rewarding adherence to rules/laws (not engaging in anti-social behaviour) | ■ Rewarding proactive citizenship (volunteering or environmental work) |
| ■ Individualised benefits (skills, training, money, gifts) | ■ Collective benefits (improved community relations) |
| ■ Universally applied | ■ Targeted |
| ■ Automatic membership/eligibility | ■ Need to join proactively |
| ■ Not linked to further sanctions | ■ Linked to sanctions |
| ■ Involves project workers and young people | ■ Involves others (parents, businesses) |

Finally, this survey of the evidence about the role of reward schemes for young people in contributing to improving community interactions and reducing anti-social behaviour has identified a number of key issues for future research, including the following:

- The expectations of such schemes and the definitions of required behaviour need to be evaluated within the context of wider norms of social capital and volunteering in the adult population.
- Many reward schemes are in their early stages and therefore the evidence about their effectiveness is limited and often based on studies of specific schemes. It should also be noted that existing research largely tells us about the motivations and behaviour of those who participate in these schemes and less about the perceptions and motivations of those who do not (Holdsworth and Boyle, 2004). The perceptions of those not participating should be included in evaluations.
- It is difficult to identify many of the positive and negative outcomes of reward schemes in quantitative terms.

- It is difficult to disentangle the specific contribution of reward schemes to changes in local communities, such as reduced fear of crime or levels of anti-social behaviour, from the impacts of other initiatives, making cost–benefit analysis problematic.
- Reward schemes will have more readily measurable direct and short-term impacts and outcomes but will also produce longer-term, indirect and often unintended outcomes that are more difficult to capture but form an important element of evaluation.

3 Description of the areas and how the two schemes work

This chapter provides a basic description of the areas and the operation of the two schemes. Data from York are not as in-depth as those from Bradford and there are some omissions in the specific data on York that render description of the scheme incomplete in places. This reflects a tension that existed throughout the evaluation of the York scheme in that it was never clear to the researchers whether it was in full operation. While the project was up and running insofar as it had been launched and had signed up members, in reality it had so few 'active'/participating members that it was difficult to describe the initiative as a scheme in the collective sense that was intended. The York scheme appeared to 'dry up' during the evaluation period and it was difficult to elicit meaningful data on its status or activities, despite repeated requests for this information. This means that data from members involved in York are highly subjective, not generalisable and inconclusive.

Socio-economic contexts

A brief summary of the socio-economic context of the wards (Table 2) illustrates the different conditions in which each scheme was operating although it should be noted that ward-level data were not necessarily representative of the catchment areas of the projects.

Physically New Earswick was built as a garden village in the 1900s and has much green space and many trees. It is approximately two miles from York city centre. By contrast the estates where the Bradford scheme was operating were built later by the local authority and were less spacious in their layout. They are approximately three miles from Bradford. As can be seen from Table 2, while there are some similarities between the areas, in particular an above average level of social renting from a single particular landlord and a lack of residents from ethnic minorities, the Wyke areas were generally more deprived and more heavily populated with families as opposed to retired people.

Though it cannot be concluded with certainty, these factors do not appear particularly significant to the varying success of each scheme, with a number of other factors (such as better resourcing) accounting for the greater success of the Bradford scheme (see further discussion in subsequent chapters).

Table 2 Socio-economic contexts of projects

	England and Wales average	New Earswick	Wyke
ACORN (A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods) classification of typical postcodes		Residents living on low income, in routine jobs, in terraced housing or flats	Residents on low income with larger families living in semi-detached housing
Indices of deprivation ranking (1 most deprived)		3,879	1,289
Ethnicity (%)	91 'white'	98 'white'	96 'white'
Residents in employment (%)	61	62	63
Proportion of retired residents (%)	14	20	12
Proportion of residents aged 20–44 (%)	35	29	36
Proportion of social renting (%)	20	20 (Parish level 64)	38 St Mary's and Shirley Manor 30 Delph Hill
Main social landlord		Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust	Bradford Community Housing Trust

Sources: ACORN (www.upmystreet.com); IoD 2000 (www.statistics.gov.uk); 2001 Census (www.statistics.gov.uk; www.mapsandstats.com).

Facilities for young people

An issue raised by both the young people and adults involved in our research related to facilities for young people in both areas. Mainstream youth work provided by the local authority was seen as sparse, or non-existent, in each area: in New Earswick, it had been withdrawn shortly after the scheme and the accompanying evaluation began; in Wyke, there was said to be very limited provision available in St Mary's and Shirley Manor, with none at all in Delph Hill.

Both young people and adults commented on the need for a youth club in the area:

If they're trying to make a community out of this dispersal order, they could have somewhere for us to go, like a youth club, even if they just used the Folk Hall, didn't have to build owt. Then you get more active in it so it's more, more of a community.

Give them a youth club to go to where they can play pool/music/hang out together.

That said, in New Earswick, a range of *specific* projects or schemes were reported as being set up to target certain groups of young people. In Wyke there was a history

of active projects for young people operating in the area, albeit only for socially excluded young people, for example in the form of JAS (Joint Activity Services).

Origins and consultation

The York scheme was devised by JRHT and launched in New Earswick, in October 2004, with the aim of rewarding young people for helping out in their community. The scheme was launched and became operational within a relatively short time. It is notable that there is little evidence of consultation or research on other reward schemes or related initiatives prior to the launch of the scheme.

The Bradford scheme evolved later and was able to draw insights on project design and operation from York. It was officially launched in February 2006 with the aim of providing a youth scheme based on rewarding young people for becoming engaged with people or organisations in their local neighbourhoods.

Project staff from both schemes emphasised their desire to cultivate a democratic decision-making culture, in which the young people's views and opinions were paramount. In both schemes, members were encouraged to take an active role in shaping future activities. Bradford staff commented that their members were very assertive and they were active in decision making:

they can be very bolshy ... they won't do anything they don't want to!

In both schemes the role of young people in the broader design, philosophy and future shape of the scheme is, however, less clear. We turn to issues on the broader conceptualisation of the scheme in Chapter 5.

Staffing and role of volunteers

The York scheme was/is managed by a project co-ordinator who works full-time for JRHT and managed the scheme as part of a wider role within community development. In addition, there were a number of 'supervisors' whose role was to oversee the activities and rewards. Some of these were members of JRHT staff, while others were residents from the village who offered their time on a voluntary basis. Activities with young people were supported by a ratio of (at least) one supervisor to four young people.

The Bradford scheme has been staffed by two project workers, each working 15 hours a week for Royds Community Association. They are managed by a Community Environment Programme Manager. This is significantly more staff time than in York. Two volunteer supervisors were also involved: one on an ad hoc basis throughout the project and one who became a project worker after a short time as a volunteer. The reward scheme is positioned within a broader programme of activities that Royds currently runs within their social programme and physical regeneration. There are observable links between the scheme activities and Royds' wider aims, such as improving local community buildings, landscaping, and a broader environmental programme.

Target group

Both schemes targeted males and females in the 11+ age group. In practice in Bradford a group of young nine and ten year olds also became members.

Neither scheme was set up to 'target' any particular type of young people, and neither scheme intended to deny membership to any young person. However, it was emphasised by workers in both localities that other agencies were addressing the needs of young people who were engaged in criminal/anti-social behaviour, or identified as an 'at risk' group. Staff working on both projects therefore expressed the view that project activities should be primarily aimed at young people who are not perceived to be 'troublemakers' in the local communities.

We didn't make an effort to include those that weren't [committing ASB] and we didn't exclude those that were being anti-social, but the fact is there's a lot of provision for those that have got, are heading towards anti-social behaviour ... there are youth projects there.

Another project worker felt that there were benefits to not targeting the scheme at those who are 'perpetrators' of ASB/crime as they felt they might not be able to trust them to behave responsibly enough to be covered by existing health and safety practices:

... sends your risk assessment through the roof!

Staff also commented that some activities might not have been possible with young people perceived to be anti-social, for example those involved in entering people's homes (such as Christmas present wrapping) or being trusted with pets (such as

dog walking). In this sense, the scheme cannot help those most demonised by other residents, as one staff member said:

The perception of kids involved is good but the rest are still demonised, especially 16 to 18 year olds ... this scheme can't really help them.

Data from young people not involved in the York scheme highlighted that the requirement to live in New Earswick to be eligible for membership was perceived as unfair and they did not accept that JHRT only funded activities in New Earswick as a justified explanation for this restriction. This had important implications where it excluded peer groups of friends joining.

Recruitment

Recruitment of members in York was initially through information in the Residents' Forum newsletter – the *Bulletin* – and word of mouth from the dedicated youth worker in New Earswick (but only at the beginning of the project as the post was then withdrawn by the local authority). The scheme was also advertised in New Earswick, via a local billboard (designed and produced by existing members). As such, all members were self-selecting. The withdrawal of the youth worker may have been a factor in the difficulties experienced in recruiting members. Attempts were later made to engage young people via the two local schools (one primary, one secondary level).

In Bradford recruitment was undertaken through various means. The original intention was to recruit via local primary and secondary schools in the area. The strategy of recruitment via primary schools was successful: the Royds staff contacted each school's head teacher who then named a specific teacher to link with the scheme in the future. Scheme staff then went into each school to introduce themselves and the project to young people and the liaison teachers subsequently selected certain children to participate, with individual students making the final decision on whether or not they took part. The local secondary school did not respond to repeated invitations to participate in the scheme (nor to requests from the evaluation team). Nevertheless, older members initially became involved with the scheme via connections with one of the scheme workers who was also a local resident and parent/guardian. Later, newer members of staff directly approached (older) local young people on the street to tell them about the project and invite participation.

Both schemes sought parental consent before young people could join the scheme. Word of mouth between young people and their parents and between peers appears to have been significant in disseminating information about each scheme. Word of mouth between peers was particularly successful in disseminating knowledge about the Bradford scheme.

Membership profile

The numbers involved and profile of members varied between the two schemes. As Table 3 shows, the number of young people who had a consistent involvement was significantly larger in Bradford than in York, where only one young person met our definition of ‘actively involved’.

Table 3 Profile of members

	Total no. of members	No. actively engaged*	No. of boys actively engaged	No. of girls actively engaged	Age range of majority of members
York	25	1	1	0	11–12
Bradford	44	4 groups of 10–12	12	32	12–15

* Defined as attending two sessions in a row.

Given the geographical spread of the Bradford scheme, funding was allocated that supported the running of the scheme in two localities (i.e. Delph Hill and St Mary’s/ Shirley Manor) for two consecutive cohorts of ten young people; each cohort would be involved until they had earned points equating to £200. To date, one cohort has completed the scheme in one of the localities. The other three cohorts are ongoing and working towards achieving the maximum number of points. The Bradford scheme also has a waiting list which the team hope to work with if funding permits them to continue provision.

Activities and rewards

Membership of a scheme did not ‘require’ taking part in any particular reward activity. Each scheme in the evaluation had a different model for ongoing communication about involvement in the project and/or recruitment for particular activities. York sent letters out to members requesting that they book a place on the activity. However, the number that could participate in activities varied because it was dependent on the number of supervisors available and in reality activities often ran with only one member present.

Bradford telephoned or sent texts to both members and their parents to say when and where to meet, so that no pre-booking was required (because their staff/young person ratio was larger and because each cohort was already limited per area). The Bradford approach appeared to be more effective in eliciting positive responses and subsequent recruitment.

Activities undertaken in York during the evaluation included:

- painting an advertising board to publicise the scheme
- devising the detail of the scheme and designing the logo
- leafleting the village to advertise the project
- distributing Sheffield Hallam University's residents survey
- taking part in evaluation activities, e.g. photographic walk, discussion groups
- a gardening project
- tidying the nature reserve
- a weekly library project (updating the children's display boards)
- litter picking
- removing graffiti and repainting local community buildings.

Activities lasted approximately two hours. An activity could be stand-alone or last up to four weeks.

The scheme rewarded participation in activities through a points system. Points were valued at around 50–75p per point, with each activity being rewarded with between two and four points (i.e. £1 – £3). Points accrued could be exchanged for rewards. These were envisioned as including trips to the cinema, visitor attractions, activity weekends and CD vouchers. In practice, because of limited member numbers, rewards were limited to gift vouchers that were given to individuals.

Bradford activities included:

- dog walking
- Christmas present wrapping and decorating Christmas trees (in old people's homes)
- tree and bulb planting
- litter picking
- leaf sweeping
- helping at open days/community events
- leaflet dropping (including Sheffield Hallam University's residents survey)
- face painting
- bench sculpting
- snow clearing and gritting
- running the Drop-in Open Age Computer Club to offer basic IT training sessions for local residents
- cleaning, removing graffiti and/or repainting local community buildings
- tidying residents' gardens.

Activities were rewarded with a credit of ten points per hour, equivalent to £5. Young people could accumulate points to the value of £200 which they spent on goods of each participant's choosing. Exchanging credit for trainers or clothes was a popular choice. Membership was time limited so that each member could accrue a maximum of £200.

Activities in both schemes took place after school, in school holidays and/or at weekends. Choices of activities tended to be determined by local concerns/requests for help and the ideas of young people and project staff. Many activities in Bradford were driven by the Neighbourhood Action Planning (NAP) agenda and were thus designed to address local community and environmental concerns. Young people

involved in the scheme could 'dip in and out of' individual projects/activities. The project workers made clear, however, that the young people who had been involved in outdoor activities had worked very hard, even when these had taken place in very cold weather.

Conclusion

This description of the schemes illustrates that they encompassed a mixture of the key dimensions of difference set out in Box 5 (see Chapter 2). They rewarded proactive behaviour rather than existing behaviour; the benefits were individualised. There were few limits on who was eligible to join, but members had to be proactive in seeking to join. Involvement was limited to project workers and young people, and generally did not involve others such as parents and businesses (though in theory York included volunteer supervisors from within the community).

The Bradford scheme was much more successful than York in recruiting and retaining members, and organised a wider range of activities. One of the significant differences between the two schemes was the level of resources. The staffing of the Bradford scheme was significantly greater and points to the importance of adequate resources for a scheme to be successful. In the next two chapters we examine other factors which influenced the development of the two schemes.

4 Community perceptions

Introduction

While the two schemes included in this evaluation shared similar objectives (ostensibly at least), and used a common framework to ‘reward’ young people who engaged in pro-social behaviour, the particular local context in which the schemes operated emerged as a powerful force in shaping them. In this chapter we consider these local contextual factors and how they impacted on setting up and running the schemes. It should be noted that this chapter contains more ‘contextual’ information on York than on Bradford. This reflects, first, the different response rates to the residents survey that yielded far more data from members of the community in the York context. Second, there are more data from young people who were non-participants in the York locality which reflects the evaluation team’s efforts to gain a firmer sense of understanding the poor levels of engagement with the York scheme.

Attitudes to young people

Both schemes were developed against a backdrop of perceived problems of intergenerational tension and increasing levels of intolerance among older residents towards young people. Before exploring how young people felt they were perceived, we first turn to views on young people as expressed by adults.

Data from the 2005 residents survey in York highlighted that some residents had experienced poor behaviour from young people. However, other individuals challenged the scale of unreasonable behaviour and reactions to it, suggesting that there was an ongoing issue of ‘unreasonable intolerance’ towards young people. Such views were expressed in the qualitative data taken from the survey of residents’ views, and by some JRHT staff and a community police officer in New Earswick at a workshop seminar (Minimising Nuisance: Maximising Tolerance) held in the locality in October 2004. It was suggested that some residents in the village stereotype young people as ‘up to no good’ and ‘hell-bent on causing anti-social behaviour’. The response of some residents was said to be out of proportion to the actual or reported ‘anti-social’ behaviour.

Various explanations were offered to explain these negative views of young people and although they represent the views of individuals and should not be generalised,

we suggest they are worth noting as a basis for further inquiry. These include the following.

Over recent years, the social mix in New Earswick has changed and some residents were perceived as having ‘different’ attitudes and lifestyles and an accordant lack of familiarity with or sympathy for the history and traditional values on which New Earswick was built. At the same time, JRHT was perceived as being less prescriptive than they once were about how homes and gardens should be maintained. For example: ‘[JRHT] can’t act with an iron fist any more’. This same group reportedly want New Earswick to be a more tightly controlled environment and have expectations of a priority police response to minor incidents, such as young people cycling on pavements, or bin bags being left in the wrong place. This small but vocal cohort of residents were unhappy with changes and retained high expectations about New Earswick and the standards they wanted to be maintained that have become entangled with perceptions of young people.

It is notable that this dynamic does not represent a clear insider/outsider dichotomy. Data from the residents survey (see below) and individuals (as above) suggest that the more critical cohort (those most likely to complain) comprise both residents who have resided in the village for a long time and newer residents who were familiar with the traditional ideals on which New Earswick was built and so also have high expectations.

Specifically, findings from the residents survey indicated that attitudes towards young people were not straightforwardly correlated to the length of time respondents have been resident in New Earswick (see Table 4). On the whole, a higher proportion of respondents who had lived in the village for 20 years or less agreed with negative statements about the behaviour of young people when compared to those who had lived in the village for 21 years or more. These findings indicate that any intolerance that may exist towards young people is not displayed by those who have been the longest-standing residents in the village.

Table 4 Attitudes of residents to young people in New Earswick

Length of residence	Percentage who believe tensions exist between young people and adults	Percentage who feel behaviour of young people has a negative impact on quality of life
0–4 years	84	52
5–20 years	78	62
21 years or more	66	43

More generally, respondents in New Earswick agreed with both negative and positive statements about young people: for instance, 76 per cent felt that young people don't use public space properly and bring disorder to the village, while the same proportion of respondents felt that the majority of young people in New Earswick do not cause any problems. When the ages of respondents were analysed, a higher percentage of residents aged 55 or under agreed with negative statements about the behaviour of young people when compared to responses from those aged over 55. Similarly, those aged over 55 were more likely to agree with positively worded statements. This may suggest that those within the 18–55 age range have less tolerant attitudes towards young people than those who are older, though this is clearly affected by older residents' access to the village upon which their perceptions of young people may be based.

The residents survey gave respondents the space to provide any further thoughts they had about young people in New Earswick: 72 individuals took the opportunity to make additional comments. Some of these comments reflected negative views about young people and parenting:

The kids in the village have no parental control, I think the parents are the main problem because they just can't seem to be bothered to care for their children. I know where my children are every minute of the day.

New Earswick has plenty of playing fields/youth groups and organised events for the young people but like most of the country the youths concerned prefer to vandalise and intimidate vulnerable 'targets'.

While others believed that most young people do not cause problems and that there are issues of intolerance amongst older residents:

There is nothing wrong with nearly all the young people I have met, in fact most are quite pleasant.

The majority of young people are no problem, it's just a few who are giving the rest a bad name. The young in our country are our future and should be treated as such. *We* should be taught respect towards them because respect works both ways.

While it is not possible to provide an equivalent statistical analysis of responses in Wyke, the open-ended question which asked people to add any further views about young people in their locality prompted a similar mix of both positive and negative responses, including:

- change in the 'type' of families/people living on the estates
- positive comments suggesting that the Delph Hill estate is a good place to live and that young people are not a problem: 'The children on Delph Hill are on the whole normal kids who like to play out just as my generation and our kids did. If you treat them with respect they respect you back. They are a good lot.'
- inadequate police response/requirement for greater police presence
- lack of facilities/organised activities for young people
- parenting/one-parent families as the root cause of young people's (perceived) problem behaviour.

As in New Earswick, there was some evidence to suggest that in the Wyke locations, 'older' residents held more positive/optimistic views about young people than their 'middle-aged' counterparts.

Existing experiences of reward schemes

Young people's knowledge and prior experience of other reward schemes was also explored because of the potential for impact on their perception and response to the specific (York or Bradford) scheme. It should be noted that different views on existing reward schemes are likely to be linked to the significant age differences between the groups (the Wyke group was recruited from a primary school, while the New Earswick group was recruited from a secondary school). In New Earswick, older young people in particular expressed somewhat cynical views of reward schemes because of their experience of the one operating in their school. The latter was said to not be used uniformly by teachers, and was perceived to be more of a motivation for less able or poorly behaved students, meaning that those in the 'top sets' were not given rewards:

If there's someone really bad and there's someone good, the person who's good all the time don't get rewarded for it, but the person who's bad but good one day, and they get loads of rewards for it. And then just go back to being bad again next day.

In Wyke, a local primary school operated a wide variety of incentive schemes, including a 'Triple A club' (Attitude, Attendance and Achievement); golden stars; a

'Table toppers' scheme rewarding good/healthy behaviour around eating; badges; stamps; and bronze, silver and gold awards through which pupils could earn stickers, badges, praise, names on notice boards, particular seats at dinner, etc. In contrast to those in New Earswick, these young people in Wyke appeared to be familiar with reward schemes through the rewards culture prevalent within their school and they clearly expressed more positive views of reward schemes than New Earswick pupils demonstrated.

Being a young person in these areas

Both schemes were, in part, concerned with promoting active citizenship among young people by encouraging them to take part in local activities in order to help stimulate civil renewal and strengthen community relations. Given the importance the schemes place on the relationship between young people and their communities, the evaluation sought to explore how young people experienced and perceived the places in which they lived.

A familiar concern voiced by young people living in both locations was that there was not enough for them to do and most were dissatisfied with the facilities or leisure opportunities available to them:

You get bored, go smash things in, I don't, but that's just what I think they do. Why they do it? They're getting drunk or drugged up cos they've got nothing to do.

Although this may be a commonly reported concern among young people in many diverse locations, concerns particular to the two locations were reported by the young people. In New Earswick, for instance, there was a perception, first, that there were not enough facilities for young people and those which were available were sometimes only pertinent to particular age groups, e.g. activities provided by the local library were perceived to be appropriate only for younger people, while there was agreement that the local park needed more facilities for older young people such as a skate park. Second, young people taking part in the research expressed feelings of resentment and/or inequitable treatment, and described ways in which they felt actively excluded from leisure facilities and public spaces/buildings that were available to others in the village. For instance, they complained about the fee-paying membership on which access to the swimming pool was based, which works to indirectly exclude some young people from using it. In addition, the Folk Hall (a local community provision run by community members) was deemed to be a place where

forums and events were only provided for older residents. Equally, some young people interviewed as part of the evaluation in New Earswick felt that it was unfair that they had to demonstrate 'pro-social behaviour' in order to receive rewards when this behaviour was not necessarily expected of adult residents (for example, litter picking). Some individuals felt that this implied that they were the ones who dropped the litter which they felt was unfair.

One particular factor stood out in New Earswick as affecting the attitudes of young people. A dispersal order was put in place during the course of the evaluation, and this generated further discontent among young people in the village and was viewed with antipathy. There was evidence that young people viewed the imposition of the order as both a disproportionate and unfair response to what they viewed as typical behaviour for young people. Further, the order was seen to be ineffective:

If they're in less groups of say two or three, they're gonna get bored easier, so they're gonna go and do more things like vandalise cars and stuff like that. Cos they're easily bored, bored easier you see.

Further, it provided a source of further antagonism between members of the community:

I think this dispersal order's supposed to bring us together. It's not, it's splitting us up.

What is perhaps a cause for concern is that although all the young people who took part in the focus groups in New Earswick were aware of the dispersal order, none were sure of the precise prohibitions it brought with regard to the size of groups that may be dispersed as well as the times it was effective, and what powers the police had to take people home. Views about the order were universally negative, and led to feelings of further exclusion:

It excludes young people.

I don't think it's fair.

Generally, the above remarks demonstrate young people's anger and hostility to the dispersal zone. There was a perception amongst the young people that as their parents were not necessarily in favour of the dispersal order, it must be elderly people without dependent children who had supported its introduction. This may in turn have fed young people's anger towards the zone and, indirectly or directly, older residents in the community.

Young people interviewed as part of the evaluation in New Earswick were keen to stress their sense of a contradiction that the village hosting a reward scheme intended to encourage youth involvement in the community was also the locality for a dispersal order that was perceived as designed to restrict young people's freedom (albeit after 9 p.m.). Teenagers' disclosures in focus groups repeatedly referred to 'they' in the collective and broad sense to mean 'adults'. In referring to the reward scheme, an undefined 'they' were cited which in reality meant JRHT; similarly 'they' in relation to the dispersal order meant North Yorkshire Police. The use of the word 'they' to describe both JRHT and other organisations operating in New Earswick suggests that young people's *perceptions* were of a cumulative adult 'force'/body influencing their immediate social context. While this may not necessarily be factually accurate, other young people appeared to have a slightly different understanding of local issues, implying that JRHT were actually directly involved in both the reward scheme and the dispersal order; the young people's perception appeared to be that at best JRHT did not oppose the order, thereby colluding with the 'restriction of their freedom'. The 'they' used by all the young people therefore appeared to represent a (largely adult) collective 'enemy'.

A further illustration of young people's 'exclusion' from mainstream leisure services within New Earswick occurred during the period of the York scheme and its evaluation: a number of complaints were reportedly received from library users about young people 'hanging around' in the library after school. This was, however, at the same time as other young people were using the facility to do homework and during the lifetime of the scheme's own 'library project' (updating the display boards). Nevertheless, the decision was taken by the local authority to close the library outside of school hours, effectively making it inaccessible for young people. It may be that the presence of a variety of community facilities in New Earswick – perceived to be only available to others/adults – increased resentment among young people that they were not getting their 'fair share'. In Wyke, by contrast, young people did not suggest that other residents were well catered for, so that while young people were unhappy with the level of local youth provision, they were at least not feeling 'excluded' from other community provision.

There was a consensus among the young people interviewed in New Earswick that negative perceptions of young people were prevalent among the older generation. Older adult residents in New Earswick were described as commonly presenting intolerant and disproportionate attitudes towards young people and their preferred activities, e.g. playing music or football. Illustrative anecdotes were relayed by young people of times they had been sworn at or threatened by older (adult) villagers. The consensus among the young people from each locality was that the older a young person is, the more likely they are to be viewed problematically (i.e. a 17 year old was more likely to be perceived negatively than a 13 year old).

Young research participants in both areas described the way they felt that older residents viewed them in three key ways:

1 as second-rate members of the community:

That we are troublemakers and therefore they look down upon us. They think that they are better than us and give us the impression that our views don't count.

Bits of crap people scraped off the bottom of a shoe. That's what they all think of us.

2 described in pejorative terms:

Yobs

Obnoxious

Intimidating

3 as the cause of disorder and/or community decline:

People who mess up stuff that the community have done.

We're trouble ... that's what they think. That's what they see.

It was unclear where the majority of the negative images came from, or why they existed; they were perceived to exist 'out there'. The general view was that it was 'older' people that held negative views about young people, and these older people were said to be anyone over the age of 35; those in their twenties and early thirties were said to remember that 'they were young once'. There was a perception, therefore, that the older people get, the more intolerant towards young people they become. Older people were particularly blamed for their intolerance, though some group members cautioned against generalisation and assuming universal intolerance. The clear consensus, though, was that *most* elderly people were intolerant of young people.

There was a general feeling that images portrayed by the media fuel pejorative attitudes about young people. Television media were blamed for 'never focusing on the good points about young people'.

We're not publicised in the best way. On the news and stuff like that, there's always things about teenagers.

When asked further about wider images of young people in the media, all respondents then concentrated on current images of young people in particular television soap operas (as sexual and/or violent). More positive images of young people were seen to exist in younger children's television programmes. The only other positive image of young people from the media was seen to be around academic achievement, for instance about A level results. It was argued that it was unfair of society to judge the majority of young people in a particular way because of the possible actions of a minority of (misbehaving) young people.

Although there was a predominant view among young people that it was generally the older generation who were intolerant of the younger generation, it was also emphasised during interviews with project staff that tensions do not apply to all young people and older residents, and that good relations do in fact exist between the different generations.

Local and historical context

Finally, follow-up interviews with individual residents in the Bradford locality suggest that existing views of the lead organisation responsible for the particular reward scheme could affect take-up rates by young people and the level of support from parents. For example, one resident group member asserted that perceptions of an unequal distribution of resources in a recent refurbishment of two estates had influenced residents' support for the reward scheme insofar as those families who felt they had been unfairly treated *vis-à-vis* refurbishment would not support their children's participation in the reward scheme. Regardless of the status of this claim, the point here is that the planning of similar youth-oriented schemes could usefully involve acknowledgement of factors that could facilitate or hinder effective partnership working.

This suggestion adds further weight to the recommendation that schemes seek to fully understand and appreciate the importance of local context and 'what has gone before' or activities operating in parallel (e.g. dispersal orders) in designing and establishing a scheme.

Conclusion – the implications of local context

The Bradford scheme had greater success in recruiting and retaining young people and in completing activities. This is clearly due to a range of factors and the relative role of each cannot be isolated. There are, however, a number of contextual factors which can be seen to have had an influence on the development of each scheme.

- 1 The level of available provision that is appropriate and designed for young people: in both scheme areas there was a lack of youth work. Young people may join a reward scheme not because of the rewards but because of a lack of other youth work provision. Older young people (15–16 years in our sample) may also feel negative towards a reward scheme if this is perceived as a tokenistic alternative to more general youth work and which might have expectations of participation in activities perceived as negative or demeaning, such as litter picking.
- 2 Existing views on reward schemes for young people: there was clear evidence in this evaluation of sceptical views towards reward schemes in one area and very positive attitudes towards reward schemes in another. A possibly significant factor in this distinction is the different age groups involved. Those aged 9–11 from a local primary school in the Bradford context held more positive views than the 15–16 year olds from the secondary school in the York context. In neither case were these experiences and attitudes known, or taken into account, by staff.
- 3 Where young people feel views about them are predominantly negative and there is a high level of regulation/control being imposed upon them, this may have a negative reaction on their willingness to partake in such schemes. The perceived regulation and control of young people in New Earswick, informed by the institution of the dispersal order, appeared to contribute to heightened feelings of anger and resentment among the young people affected. Young people felt this created a cynicism and lack of participation in other schemes aimed at young people that were being delivered at the same time.
- 4 The local and historical context and perceptions of the lead organisation/ partnerships involved in the scheme are worth researching prior to the scheme's operation and as an ongoing aspect of monitoring and evaluation. Issues that might appear unrelated (such as recent refurbishment and window replacement) were cited as potential influences on resident group members and parents' support for a scheme.

5 Evaluating the success of the scheme

In this chapter we return to the schemes themselves and consider some particular factors which impacted on their development.

Philosophy and purpose

Good practice examples identified in both the literature and our data (outlined further in Chapter 6) suggest that reward schemes should have explicit aims. Both schemes in this evaluation had a key aim to reward young people for making a positive contribution to their community. In this sense the purpose of the initiatives were explicit insofar as participants were given rewards for particular activities undertaken in their local communities. However, the broader philosophy underpinning these reward schemes was opaque. Questions of whom the projects targeted, and why, reoccurred in the evaluation process because the rationale had not been clearly articulated. For instance, funding for the York scheme was justified on the basis that resources had tended to prioritise young people involved in ‘bad’ behaviour, and ‘good kids’ deserved some resource allocation¹ – the subsequent press release from JRF to launch the scheme was headlined ‘Launch of “good kids” scheme on York Estate’ (JRF, 2004). Bradford was founded on similar grounds though initial discussions highlighted that a reward scheme might serve an additional purpose:

... to attract kids on the brink of being involved in trouble.

These vague notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ were not defined and could not and did not provide conditions of eligibility. ‘Good’ and ‘bad’ are relative and not universal concepts. The evidence from previous research (see Chapter 2) highlights that defining with clarity whether the scheme is universal or targeted merits careful thought if the potential of the schemes to provide proactive support for young people to make positive contributions to their communities through positive behaviour is to be maximised.

Another issue is what reward schemes were achieving (or trying to achieve) in terms beyond that of ‘making a positive contribution to the community.’ Analysis of data from scheme staff and participants on the schemes reveals different philosophies and priorities, perceptions of the role of the schemes and eligibility criteria. Seven different purposes were identified.

Intergenerational relations and promoting appreciation of young people's positive contribution

Interviews with supervisors highlighted that some felt that the impetus for their particular reward scheme was fractious community relations between older and younger residents:

There are misunderstandings on both sides: I want to help build a bridge ... there's a labelling system; if young people get victimised and said that they will do that, then they might ... young people also have preconceptions of older people – I felt the same way when I was younger.

Related to this, most project stakeholders referred to bringing younger and older members of the community closer together as an objective of the scheme(s). One project worker, for example, described how scheme activities enabled young people to come into contact with older residents more frequently and therefore helped demonstrate that young people do and can make a positive contribution to the community:

We have to help the public recognise that all kids aren't bad.

By raising the profile of young people in a positive way, it was hoped that this might facilitate longer-term change in older residents' perceptions of younger people, though it was acknowledged that negative perceptions of youth were not unique to their locality:

I think it's the problem all over the country ... of how young people are perceived.

Tackling current perpetrators of ASB

Addressing the problem of anti-social behaviour (ASB) was often perceived as a possible, but unlikely, aim of the scheme. It was suggested that young people who are already implicated in anti-social behaviour in the area(s) might join the scheme once they saw that helping out in the community led to rewards, and therefore this might help divert them from troublesome behaviour. In contrast, others felt this was over-optimistic as young people who might be involved in poor behaviour would be least likely to be convinced of the scheme's merits. Young people interviewed felt that reward schemes would not appeal to those already recognised as involved in negative behaviour.

Influencing the potential for involvement in ASB

Other workers suggested that the scheme should pre-empt involvement in ASB by specific targeting of young people with potential to become involved in poor behaviour. In turn, the scheme would contribute to reducing future levels of anti-social behaviour. Specifically at risk were said to be younger, impressionable children who were more easily led astray by older youths who triggered complaints. It was felt that a reward scheme might provide this (younger) group with some interests and purpose and so encourage them to join 'the normal kids' and not be enticed by the 'bad' kids.

[it] might encourage them to join the normal kids if they have some interests, something to work towards and if they receive perks then they're less likely to get lured by the bad kids ... best to catch 'em while they're young.

Peer role models were also suggested as important:

It's also providing a bit of a positive role image to other young kids.

Providing youth work/something to do for young people

A common lament from adults (scheme workers, residents, volunteers) and young people was the absence of activities to occupy young people's leisure time. Some project staff (some of whom were qualified youth workers) appeared to be working to a model more akin to mainstream youth work in providing and facilitating a space for organised activities and events for young people. The rewards for involvement were thus construed as an added incentive for those young people involved. Indeed, they referred to the scheme in youth work terms:

There's normal youth work, then this positive youth work.

The key difference was on the emphasis that was placed on being involved in activities or events that were positive for the local community; nevertheless the fact that they were trained youth workers led them to conceive the reward scheme as a form of youth work. This was in contrast to other members of staff involved who were not professional youth workers.

Raising self-confidence and self-esteem through rewarding positive behaviour

Though this was a stated aim for both schemes, no project staff or volunteers made explicit reference to the aim. However, when questioned, the aim was alluded to but in relation to broader roles. For example:

It's all about building self-confidence and self-esteem and that you can be of use to the community and that you actually, you know, you're there as beneficial members of that community.

Despite no participants mentioning confidence or self-esteem, a majority of feedback from Bradford members relates to emotional well-being which is arguably inseparable from confidence and sense of self. For instance, descriptors such as 'great', 'fantastic', 'wicked', 'cool', 'good laugh', 'makes you feel lucky to be in it' and 'you feel better than others' are very positive. The issue remains, however, of the near impossibility of attributing these outcomes to specific mediators such as rewarding positive behaviour since, among a plethora of factors, being with friends, the break with routine and being paid for tasks were significant co-determinants.

Redirecting resources for positive behaviour

A number of project workers recounted that an initial motivation for the schemes was the desire to redress the balance in favour of 'good kids' because for too long, too much resource had focused on 'bad kids':

I wanted to turn the situation on its head; it's not good sense to spend so much time on so little people [*i.e. the minority of young people involved in ASB*]. We needed to begin to concentrate on the unknown young people – it's good parenting strategy to ignore bad behaviour.

Another worker also stated:

There's all these kids that do go to school and stuff and do do their homework and whatever and don't get into trouble but you know, but why are they bothering, because they don't get a trip to Scarborough and stuff.

This impetus for attracting and rewarding young people with a sound record of behaviour is evidenced further in that one of the schemes had initially been called the 'Good Kids Scheme' before it was renamed by its members.

Fostering 'good citizenship'

A number of project workers described the aims of their scheme as being concerned with 'encouraging young people to take pride in their community'. One project worker felt that this would help foster a sense of 'good citizenship' among members. In turn, this might awaken an interest in contributing to making the community a better place as they grow older:

If they take pride in it now, they might remember it and care about what happens to it in the future.

In this sense, for some there was an explicit emphasis on environmentally oriented community work rather than generic youth work. It was also thought that by stressing the importance of community engagement, active citizenship and/or environmental awareness, the current physical community might also be improved, for example with people dropping less litter.

Several staff members and volunteer supervisors raised one or more of the following as aims or models for provision related to notions of the 'good citizen':

- engaging young people in positive behaviour
- specifically encouraging community activity and/or involvement in civic renewal
- heightening awareness of environmental issues.

These could have benefits in contributing to physically improving the local area and, notably, introducing 'self-policing'. A number of illustrations were provided of where young people who had been involved in cleaning up graffiti then grew annoyed and sometimes directly challenged other young people thought to be involved in repeat vandalism and/or graffiti of the area that they had cleaned and/or repainted. For example:

When we removed all the graffiti, they were reading like the names that had been wrote and then if kids were walking past and they'd seen their names that were it – they were targeted. 'We've seen your graffiti on here. Your name's been here. I've got to clean this off and you've been writing it again!' So like they were getting paid to clean it up, but they didn't want it to happen again. I think it gave them a little bit more respect for the actual community itself and for buildings.

This 'self-policing' was thought to evolve around young people beginning to 'take a pride' and having a 'sense of ownership' in their community, which would influence how they themselves behaved in the area, and how they might 'monitor' other young people's activities.

Inevitably, most staff sought to combine more than one priority:

This was an excellent way of curing another problem which is that kids have got nothing to do [*and*] we've got environmental problems; hang on, put the two together ... it's worked really well.

These themes highlight a number of different perspectives on the background, rationale and intentions of their particular reward scheme. None are contradictory or mutually exclusive of others. However, the thinking behind the scheme and aspirations for outcomes are likely to influence the activities on offer, the nature of rewards, the young people it targets, those it excludes and the overall approach to operation. This is influenced further by staff changes that contributed to alterations in focus and/or style of provision within schemes, and the motivation to provide a scheme that met a number of concerns (e.g. meeting the gap in youth provision, environmental agendas, redistributing resources).

Target group(s)

Age and gender emerged as two important factors in recruiting members to the schemes.

Age

Both participants and non-participants felt that 15 years was a 'cut-off age' at which point young people are highly unlikely to become involved, irrespective of the nature of activities or rewards. Over-15s were reported as likely to view the scheme as 'geeky and boring'. This was borne out by both schemes experiencing difficulties in engaging and retaining young people beyond the age of 14. This seems to relate to:

- age-specific leisure interests and the appropriateness of scheme activities to older teenagers

- the value of the reward and how far this motivates involvement
- credibility of the scheme: older potential members had more questions about schemes and views on potential members and the adults involved
- dynamics within peer groups and dominant members' perceptions of reward schemes (both the scheme under evaluation and others operating in the locality). In New Earswick, for example, a dominant idea among older non-members (15–16 years) was that such schemes were paradoxical (and patronising) because they offered rewards for behaviour/actions that young people should practise as routine. However, this comment should not be seen in isolation from these students' rather negative view of school-based reward schemes.

Gender

The Bradford scheme had some difficulty in recruiting male members, and those that did get involved were reported by some scheme leaders to be less enthusiastic than female participants:

the boys are just less motivated and less dedicated.

Overall, female scheme members in Bradford were said to 'work harder' and boys were 'more distracted'.

It is impossible to assess whether gender was significant in York given the small number of members, but data from teenagers not involved offer useful pointers. While females appeared ambivalent and uninterested in the scheme (but also admitted knowing nothing or very little about it), male students appeared more knowledgeable and were forthcoming on their reasons. All five male students in one focus group (15–16 years) asserted they had no interest in the type of activities offered and this would directly influence decisions over becoming involved. Significantly, when asked for examples of activities that might appeal, they listed more traditionally masculine tasks, such as painting the local rugby club, or painting local buses.

These findings are not unexpected and could be predicted on the basis of evidence from other research on the enduringly gendered nature of young people's hobbies and pastimes and that on the gendered use of space and place (see, for example, Driskell, 2002).

Engaging and retaining participants

Recruitment methods

As noted in Chapter 3, the two schemes used a variety of mechanisms for recruiting members. Certain key factors emerged that facilitate success in engaging and retaining scheme members:

- support from local schools, and a named contact in each school who is responsible for facilitating access to young people
- consultation and review with young people (participants and non-participants)
- activities that are seen as credible, and that take account of potentially different interests of females and males and those of different ages
- definition and differentiation from other reward schemes operating in the same or a close locality.

For Bradford, a key factor in early successful recruitment of members was said to be that a particular worker was known to most young people in the area, both as a local resident and as someone who had been involved in previous work with young people. Therefore, the profile of individual staff members may be an issue for future projects: for example, have they worked with the young people before? What organisation(s) are they affiliated to? Do they live locally? Are they known to have children themselves? These issues are likely to impact on the success of recruitment.

However, other workers felt that it was potentially beneficial to be unknown to the young people involved so as to be a 'fresh face' and able 'to gee up interest' as well as set firm ground rules etc. In this sense, it was felt that the initial approach and style/personality of the workers were more important here.

I think it's hard to work with kids on an estate that you know ... when you know all the kids because then it's always 'Well you're doing that because they're your favourites. You know them.' You know, 'That's your cousin's best mate' or whatever, whereas here we don't know them.

The place of partnership working with relevant local agencies/bodies is also important. Royds appeared successful in targeting certain local schools to assist in their recruitment of members. Scheme staff attended and gave briefing sessions to potential members and sought particular teaching staff contacts.

The role of the reward

As previously discussed, the level of reward offered to young people varied greatly between the two schemes. In Bradford, members received ten points per hour, equivalent to £5. Given this higher rate of 'reward', the length of time that young people could participate was time limited: once members had accrued points up to the value of £200 they were eligible to go shopping with the money, but they then also had to relinquish their membership to allow the next cohort of members to participate. In theory, members could 'cash in' their points at any time for a reward of their choice (up to the value of their points and not above the £200 limit) but in reality they were facilitated/encouraged to save their money until the £200 'end'.

York, on the other hand, was less fixed in its approach to points and rewards: points awarded varied by activity, the amount of money associated with each point was sometimes unclear, and the point at which rewards could be received was not set out at the start of the project, culminating in ad hoc reward procedures. The rewards were also of a significantly lower level than in Bradford.

Both schemes, therefore, tended to operate on a principle of 'delayed gratification' insofar as participants did not get an immediate reward for their work, though they knew they were accruing points.

There were mixed views as to whether the money available was what motivated members to join the scheme. Participants appeared to demonstrate an awareness of the wider purpose(s) of the scheme, but also the fundamental part that rewards played:

It's to do with like, it's helping the community, like if people can't do things, like it might be walking people's dogs, painting the outsides of shops, trying to make the community a better place and then you get rewarded ... because you get £5 an hour.

The money spurs me on when I'm tired after school.

All the Bradford members were motivated by the rewards, enjoyed receiving the payments and looked forward to spending their £200. However, young people's ongoing involvement and commitment to the scheme did not appear to be driven by this material incentive. There was a suggestion that the reward was perhaps useful as a way to attract young people to the scheme initially:

it does matter because if we weren't getting anything we wouldn't have started.

However, once they were involved and enjoying participation, there was less need for the reward:

I've got to like it now.

The level of the reward also seemed to be perceived as very generous and possibly excessive in both Bradford cohorts. Participants in one focus group explained how, when they first heard about the scheme, they thought the £5 reward for an hour's work was 'unbelievable'. They clearly did not expect to receive that amount of money and claimed that a lower amount would have been enough to persuade them to get involved, although £1 per hour was considered too low and one participant suggested that they would have 'felt cheated' by receiving such a small sum. One member suggested that £3 would have been acceptable. A few also reported that their friends didn't believe that they were accruing so much money.

When I found out we were doing it I thought it was unbelievable ... it sounded a lot, £200.

Older (15 and 16 year old) non-participants suggested that the York rewards did not last long enough for it to be worth their while saving up for them: the level of reward, in fact, was one of their biggest criticisms. The value of reward in New Earswick may be better suited to younger participants.

I aren't walking round picking up litter, just to go to Flamingo Land for free.

The need for and level of reward were clearly linked to the nature of the activities on offer. Some project workers explicitly stated that they would not be happy asking young people to do activities that adult residents would not/do not do without a substantial payment.

Staff views on the importance of rewards for the potential involvement of young people generally concurred that for the higher-paying scheme, monetary rewards were the initial motivation, but that this would not have been enough to sustain involvement if young people had not enjoyed the activities, or got on with other scheme members and/or staff.

£5 is a massive incentive ... but they get something else out of it, not just the money.

The incentive for the York scheme was less clear, and perhaps might explain its smaller group of members. It was neither a high-paying reward scheme, nor was it enough like generic youth work to be successful on this basis.

Other motivating factors

For those involved in the schemes a number of other motivating factors for continued participation emerged. One was being able to meet up with friends. Most participants said that if their friends stopped attending they might stop too. Equally, it was also reported that a friend's initial attendance had been an incentive to become involved. Staff were also aware of the importance of friends' participation in engaging/retaining each participant.

Because like through the six-week holidays families go opposite ways and I think they all just love being together and it helps your days pass on as well.

Spending time with friends can be facilitated through generic youth work, which can also encourage some of the other benefits which staff suggested young people got from participation such as developing new social skills and undertaking new activities. The particular emphasis in reward schemes of carrying out positive community activities also brought about particular benefits for young people, including:

- getting used to the idea of work
- seeing their impact on the community, for example:

We did a litter-pick the other week on Delph Hill because where the ball park is it's where there's a lot of pensioners' bungalows and it's not right good where they all hang about. And all the pensioners came out and they were applauding the kids ... we were all like we didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Because they came out clapping and they were like 'I can't believe it! No one ever does owt good on this estate.'

Within the Bradford scheme, project staff also felt that the two groups of young people meeting each other had helped to break down some assumptions they may have held about each other:

Shirley Manor had such a bad opinion on Delph Hill, 'Oh god, we've got to go to Delph Hill. Oh, my god! Will they take us shoes off us? Will they take us phones off us? Do you want to hold us phones?' And we're like, 'No, no, no, no. Just keep hold of them.' And then when they came they went, 'Oh, it ain't that bad, is it?', and we're like, 'No, we told you.'

The role of project workers

It was also apparent that the success of the Bradford scheme in recruiting and retaining members was partly related to the approach of the project workers who were universally praised by focus group participants. They were described in the following terms:

- 'brilliant', 'fun'
- 'they're just like us', 'they're like kids', 'they have teenage minds'
- 'they make it fun for us because we don't want grumpy people telling us what to do'.

Although there had been a change in the project workers in Bradford halfway through the course of the scheme, the focus group discussion revealed that young people had not experienced this as problematic to the scheme. They had developed close relationships with the new project workers, who were described as being 'interested' and reliable.

In sum, it was clear that the participants placed a priority on project workers being dependable and honest, and gave examples of being let down in the past. Importance was therefore placed on the relationships of trust that the project workers had built with the young people, and the regularity of meeting up and/or doing specific activities with members.

Having fun

Participant feedback on Bradford activities was unanimously positive and included the following: 'fun', 'exciting', 'great', 'fantastic', 'wicked', 'cool', 'good laugh'. These comments highlight that the scheme was viewed as both enjoyable and credible.

In the focus groups uncertainty persisted around specific activities given that group members were more willing to be involved in certain activities without reward (e.g. face painting at community events) than they were in others (e.g. litter picking). This highlights the importance of activity choice in motivation towards joining and remaining active in the scheme, and again highlights that it is difficult to disentangle whether the activities *always* need to be enjoyable to retain members or whether a balance of enjoyable and less enjoyable/disliked would be sufficient to retain members if the rewards were substantial enough.

Role of consultation

In both schemes groups of young people (either already members or potential members) were reportedly consulted about the establishment and design of the scheme, with consultation focusing on, for example, guidelines, potential points and rewards, ideas for activities, etc. In contrast to staff opinions, the young people involved did not feel that they had been consulted on potential activities (or rewards) that would attract them. It seems the extent of consultation could have been improved.

Young people, whether involved in the schemes or not, had many suggestions for their improvement. By listening to those voices it is possible that there might have been greater success, particularly in York, in recruiting and retaining members. Overall, the message from young people was that if reward schemes were to have any future they must have a flexible approach, be open to criticism or feedback and be seen to be willing to adapt as a result.

Conclusions

A number of issues are raised by the evaluation that have potential to create tensions and/or problems *vis-à-vis* engaging young people, sustaining members' interest and widening the prospect for outcomes beyond financial rewards.

First, irrespective of the type of initiative or target group, a clear conceptual framework that is mutually agreed, shared and understood by providers and recipients holds better guarantees for effectiveness in meeting its objectives, retaining participants and sustaining itself over a long time frame. This raises funding implications insofar as longer-term funding that allows for more advanced planning and removes the tendency to short-term contracts will facilitate dialogue and

reflective practice on clarifying purpose, intentions and operation. Clarity on these grounds will also facilitate processes of evaluation and the production of a coherent evidence base that could support funding applications.

Neither scheme was successful in engaging young people aged 15 years and over. Even in relatively universal schemes it may prove more effective to target under-15 year olds. Thought must also be given to ensuring that there are sufficient activities to engage and retain both boys and girls in the scheme.

One factor which differentiated these schemes from generic youth work was the element of reward, which was also linked to the activities which were undertaken. There was some evidence that the financial reward, when sufficiently large, was an incentive to join the scheme. A longer-term evaluation could usefully address whether reward schemes with financial incentives have a useful role in 'switching on' an interest among young people, whether this be a pride in one's community, environmental awareness, enjoying outdoor activities such as gardening, or working with older members of the community. Thereafter, financial incentives may become less important and not key to maintaining the activity. The level of reward requires careful consideration: pitched too high and it may be consuming resources where young people would in any event be involved at a lower rate; pitched too low and it may be a disincentive to joining a scheme where young people are expected to carry out activities which adults would not do without payment. Whether or not collective rewards (i.e. pooling 'points') would influence engagement and retention in schemes is also worth exploring.

Whatever the nature of the reward this will not in itself be sufficient to keep young people engaged with a scheme. Enjoyment of the activities, trust in the youth workers/staff and peer support are all important in retaining members. The enjoyment and reward that the young people in Bradford had obtained from taking part in the project were palpable.

6 Reflections on the evaluation

Scheme success?

While it was not possible to meet one of the original aims of the evaluation – to carry out an ‘impact analysis’ of the schemes, e.g. on intergenerational tolerance – it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions on whether the schemes met their original aims (see Chapter 1).

York

The York scheme had not been operationalised according to its aims:

- Because of the low level of participation and resultant lack of impact in New Earswick, the scheme has not been able to ‘*stimulate a greater appreciation of the positive contribution young people can make*’.
- It is impossible to assess whether it has ‘*improved young people’s self-image through rewarding positive behaviour*’ because only one member was consistently actively engaged. For him, there may have been gains in having his contribution acknowledged but it was a somewhat isolating experience. There was also evidence that some members who had been involved earlier were teased as a result of their participation and consequently withdrew.
- It has not been possible to evaluate if the scheme ‘*reduced young people’s involvement in anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance*’ but given its low participation rates, this is highly unlikely.
- It has also not been possible to assess if the scheme ‘*increased tolerance amongst adults of the visible presence of young people in the community*’, but again this is unlikely given the lack of visibility in the community. However, the emergence of the scheme has stimulated debate on the factors that create barriers to positive experiences of being a young person in that locality.

Overall, the York scheme failed to achieve its aims. A number of reasons account for this: prior to the scheme set-up, lack of planning and research on learning from other schemes and consultation with young people; inadequate resources and staffing levels; inappropriate design, level of rewards and type of activities; and specific local contextual issues (such as the dispersal order).

Bradford

From our analysis, the Bradford scheme has been (and continues to be) more successful insofar as it offers a much appreciated service for a limited number of young people. Furthermore, there are signs that the scheme has potential to achieve some of its broader aims:

- Evidence is limited on whether activities are '*stimulating a greater appreciation of the positive contribution young people can make*' though the potential to achieve this is sound, with members and activities developing enhanced visibility at local community events, members receiving praise from local residents (e.g. litter picking) and local newspaper publicity etc. This has great potential to facilitate an '*increased tolerance amongst adults of the visible presence of young people in the community*', though a longer-term evaluation would be necessary to address this question.
- As mentioned previously, the positive feedback from members suggests movement towards '*improving young people's self-image through rewarding positive behaviour*'. However, it is still not possible to assess the related aim of '*reducing young people's involvement in anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance*' since a short-term evaluation cannot measure this, and such outcomes are inextricably linked to other contextual factors.
- The scheme definitely met its target of '*increasing young people's awareness of, and involvement in, community and environmental activities*', evidenced by young people's comments on their increased awareness of their local environment, and their desire to stop dropping litter, begin to help tackle graffiti, etc. Similarly, the activities members were involved in appeared to be meeting the connected aim of '*addressing concerns highlighted through the local Neighbourhood Action Planning (NAP) process*'.

The Bradford scheme, therefore, was successfully established during the evaluation period and began to demonstrate some positive outcomes for the young people involved. These correlate with some of the positive outcomes from reward schemes outlined in Chapter 2 (see Box 2) that have the potential to be achieved by a well-resourced reward scheme. Where schemes are set up and run without adequate resources, particularly in terms of staffing (as in York), it is much less likely that these positive outcomes will be achieved.

The context for reward schemes

We turn now to the broader issues to which the evaluation gives rise. Chapter 2 indicated the multiple and sometimes contradictory forces which have led to the promotion of reward schemes in the UK. As with the schemes considered there, those in York and Bradford also reflected these contradictions and difficulties. The main motivating force behind them was in some way to 'reward' good behaviour in children, yet this was set against the backdrop of young people being perceived by some groups as anti-social. Like many of the reward schemes for young people described in Chapter 2, the schemes required positive participation by the young people. This is in contrast to those for adults, which generally only require passive compliance with already established norms. This distinction between schemes must be clearly acknowledged.

Further, clarity on the philosophy and purpose of the initiative is salient to defining the project's direction, mode of operation, target groups, etc. In particular, it is worth considering how to provide a reward scheme that is not perceived as expecting young people to do what adult residents would not. This perception of targeting young people (only) for involvement in community activities may cause resentment (as it did for some non-participants in this evaluation). Derisory messages can be inadvertently created through attaching low values/points or rewards to activities that young people are expected to become involved in. If the model being used/developed is more akin to youth work this would appear to be less of a risk. It is also important to set out the model of practice for staff at the outset, so that the team can attempt to work towards shared aims. A model with sufficient flexibility to accommodate staff changes (and short-term budgets) is likely to be most successful.

The success and impact of a reward scheme is influenced by a plethora of contextual factors. These include: peer status and reputation attached to the scheme; family circumstances (extent of parent/guardian support); other national or local reward schemes in operation (experiences of, views on); media discourses on youth; national government and local public policy on youth and/or ASB, e.g. dispersal orders; other local youth provision, facilities and/or access to community buildings; and the local context of intergenerational conflict or tension. These factors must all be taken into account in shaping a scheme that will be successful in achieving its aims.

Specific tensions that backdrop the scheme are also salient, e.g. the prevalence of ASB and/or fear of ASB and potential intolerance of young people by some adult residents and, in some cases, other young people. Ideally, a reward scheme would begin to tackle these intra- and intergenerational tensions. Our findings suggest that residents' views and attitudes on the behaviour of young people warrant inquiry if

scheme leaders are to gain a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the issues which (may) mediate support for schemes. Appropriate and effective ways forward for a reward scheme and intergenerational harmony are more likely if underpinned by a more nuanced understanding of the diversity and complexity of specific and localised contextual issues.

An evaluation design with a longitudinal element is recommended to incorporate the potential of reward schemes to produce longer-term, often indirect and/or unintended outcomes (e.g. future volunteering/'active citizenship' levels), which reflect the broader policy aims of developing social capital and promoting active citizenship, civil renewal and respect outlined in Chapter 2. The claims for reward schemes set out in Chapter 2 are that they can have particular effects in achieving these broader aims. Yet they are also often introduced as a panacea to particular problems such as young people 'hanging about' and targeted in areas perceived to be 'problematic'. In this context it may be noted that neither New Earswick nor Wyke had any generic youth work provision. The schemes in this sense were simply standing in for such provision, and were successful insofar as they were able to provide a similar approach. How much a 'rewards' element adds to what generic youth work can offer is hard to evaluate.

It may be particularly important to provide reward schemes (and/or youth work) that help 'connect' young people to their wider community beyond peers/friends and family, if debates around the significance of social capital continue. There is some evidence to suggest that young people are less 'connected' to their communities than older residents (Fahmy, 2004).

This was also raised by young people we spoke to in New Earswick, who felt excluded from their community. As Fahmy highlights, there is a clear link between social capital and/or civic engagement and satisfaction with one's community. In our analysis, some young people in New Earswick lack both satisfaction and appropriate facilities, and therefore have lower social capital and civic engagement levels. This clearly provided an important backdrop to the York scheme – one which a minor reward scheme was unlikely to be able to address.

7 Moving to good practice

Setting up a reward scheme for young people is not without risk. Drawing on the findings of the evaluation of the two JRF-funded schemes and the wider literature on reward schemes, the following section of the report outlines key questions, checklists and practical fact sheets to be used by groups and agencies thinking of setting up a reward scheme.

Will a reward scheme work for your community?

Most reward schemes are small-scale and occur in local areas; they need to be firmly rooted in their local context. Prior to investing time and resources in establishing a scheme, there is a need to gather information and consult widely with residents, young people and other agencies working in the neighbourhood.

Activity

Use the following questions to help identify what information you need to gather in order to decide whether a reward scheme would be appropriate for your community.

- 1 What are the specific problems/issues that concern the community? Do they relate to particular locations, groups of young people, etc.?
- 2 What facilities are available for young people in the neighbourhood; how well used are they?
- 3 How would a reward scheme complement what is already in place?
- 4 Which agencies/individuals currently work with young people?
- 5 Which other agencies/groups are active in the neighbourhood and what contribution could they make to the development of a reward scheme?
- 6 What outcome(s) do you want to achieve and by when?
- 7 What evidence is there to suggest that a reward scheme would be effective: e.g. has anything similar been done elsewhere and, if so, how successful was it?
- 8 Have any local surveys been undertaken to establish baseline data against which the impact of a reward scheme could be evaluated?

Further issues to consider

Before making any decisions on whether to set up a reward scheme it is worth spending some time considering the following questions:

- 1 Does the organisation setting up the scheme have credibility within the local community? If not, how could this be achieved?
- 2 Can you identify any alternative interventions that might be more effective in addressing the issues of concern, e.g. provision of more general facilities for young people such as youth shelters, diversionary activities, provision of youth work?
- 3 Would young people be asked to undertake levels of volunteering and engagement in community activities when such acts of citizenship are not common amongst adult members of the community? If so, how will these issues of equity be dealt with?
- 4 Is there a local forum or community group where ideas can be discussed and priorities agreed, potential solutions assessed and an action plan produced?

Research evidence suggests there may be a range of benefits associated with reward schemes. For example, they have a role to play in engaging young people in stimulating activities, they can improve the self-confidence and self-esteem of participants and lead to a heightened awareness of others and community issues. At the same time, however, it should be recognised that the outcomes of existing reward schemes for young people are complex and mixed, and often include unintended negative consequences. In order to maximise the benefits and minimise the negative outcomes careful planning is required.

The pros and cons of reward schemes

The following checklist on the pros and cons of reward schemes may be useful in helping you decide on whether a reward scheme is the right option for your community. It can also be used to ensure that the potential benefits are maximised and the potential negative impacts are minimised.

Positive outcomes

- Improved self-confidence and self-esteem of participants
- Improved awareness of others and community issues
- Improved skills such as negotiation and communication
- Enhanced educational attainment and formal qualifications
- Material and financial gains for participants
- Improved access for young people to educational, leisure and social facilities
- Tangible benefits for the recipients of volunteering activities
- Improved community relations (e.g. between young and elderly people)
- Improved relations and trust between young people and local institutions and agencies
- Promotion of positive role models and positive behaviour
- Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour and truancy

Negative outcomes

- Reduced self-esteem if not eligible for rewards
- Further alienation and disaffection
- Increased propensity to engage in anti-social behaviour
- Increasing existing gaps between individuals' access to services and life opportunities
- Polarisation between those receiving and not receiving rewards
- Resentment among targeted and non-targeted groups
- Further perception that young people are being stigmatised and punished
- Positive behaviour becomes dependent on receiving rewards and additional incentives

(Continued)

Positive outcomes

- Reduced levels of fear of crime and young people
- Increasing levels of intergenerational interaction and tolerance
- Increasing levels of local social capital
- Improved local physical environment
- Cost savings

Negative outcomes

- Increasing costs and resources

Getting started

The local context has a significant impact on the development and design of reward schemes. It is important to seek synergies with existing youth provision and to ensure that there is no duplication of provision. Further, in seeking to create sustainable solutions to anti-social behaviour there are real advantages if schemes are embedded within local community structures and are responsive to residents' (including young people's) needs and concerns.

Meeting the needs of the local community

The following questions can be used in meetings with key local stakeholders to stimulate discussion and debate about the role that a reward scheme could play.

- 1 How are young people viewed and treated by adult residents?
- 2 How do young people feel about how they are viewed and treated by adult residents?
- 3 How could a reward scheme contribute towards addressing fear of young people and lack of intergenerational tolerance?
- 4 In practical terms, how could a reward scheme contribute towards building community cohesion and promote greater tolerance of the visible presence of young people?

Activity – a feasibility study

Prior to establishing a reward scheme it is advisable to carry out a feasibility study, which may include the following elements:

- an audit of existing youth facilities and services
- activities and meetings with different key stakeholders in the local community to establish whether there is general support for a reward scheme. At this stage it is important to ensure that the widest possible range of members of the community have a voice including:
 - potential adult volunteers
 - parents/guardians
 - local agencies including schools and educational and training groups
 - established youth groups
- consultation with young people of different ages/genders and with different interests (schools and existing youth schemes may be able to help facilitate this).

The rationale and philosophy of reward schemes

Reward schemes cannot substitute for mainstream youth provision and it is essential when developing a scheme that everyone involved is clear about the rationale and underlying philosophy of the scheme.

Clarifying and agreeing the rationale and philosophy of the reward scheme

Use the following questions to ensure that all those involved in setting up a scheme are clear about the underlying aims and objectives of the scheme:

- 1 Which groups of young people is the scheme seeking to target/reach and why?
- 2 What behaviours is the scheme seeking to address?

(Continued)

- 3 Are rewards to be given for passive desistance from unwanted behaviours or do they require a proactive demonstration of required behaviour?
- 4 Are the rights and responsibilities associated with membership of the scheme clearly stated and explained to participants?
- 5 How can you avoid the danger of simply benefiting young people who are already motivated and involved in community activities?
- 6 Is the scheme based on a clear understanding of the type of incentives that will be valued by young people?
- 7 If the scheme is to target young people who appear disaffected and/or isolated how can the rewards/incentives be crafted so that they are attractive to the target group?
- 8 Is there recognition that activities may be valued for reasons other than monetary reward? For example, apart from any direct rewards, less tangible benefits such as public recognition of contribution, social and personal benefits, skill development that may lead to increased opportunities for paid employment and further training are powerful incentives for young people.
- 9 Will the scheme help provide solutions to problems that young people experience and assist them to achieve their goals?

Involving young people in setting up and running a reward scheme

In setting up a reward scheme it is important that young people are centrally involved in the initial design and subsequent implementation and evaluation of the scheme. Only by giving young people a central place in the management of the scheme will they develop a strong sense of ownership of the schemes, which in turn will ensure that the target activities and rewards match their particular needs.

Finding out what young people value

The following key questions can be used to stimulate discussion with groups of young people about the type of reward scheme they would like to be involved in.

- 1 What do young people value about the neighbourhood where they live and what would they like to see changed?
- 2 What sort of reward schemes are young people already subject to and what do they feel about existing schemes?
- 3 What are the best ways of recruiting young people to the scheme and which local organisations could help in the promotion of the scheme?
- 4 What eligibility criteria should be used and what, if any, sanctions should be employed?
- 5 What are the barriers that would prevent young people from joining a scheme and how could they be overcome? (Consider transport and access arrangements, the location and timing of activities, the influence of peer pressure, etc.)
- 6 How can the scheme maximise the opportunities for ineligible individuals to gain or regain eligibility for rewards?
- 7 What sort of additional support would young people value in order to meet the expectations of required behaviour?
- 8 What activities would young people enjoy doing for gaining rewards? Is there a need to provide a choice of different activities/rewards for different target age/gender/interest groups?
- 9 What type of rewards/incentives are valued by different groups of young people?
- 10 Should activities and rewards be individual or collective or a mixture of the two?

Managing a reward scheme

Reward schemes are resource intensive. Running a reward scheme requires specialist skills but retaining staff and volunteers can be very difficult in a climate of funding uncertainty.

The most successful schemes are based on open and democratic decision-making processes in which young people's views and opinions are given primacy. Whatever the management structures adopted by the scheme it is vital that young people have a voice on the decision-making body.

The following checklist has been designed as a guide to help those responsible for establishing and running schemes.

A checklist for designing and managing schemes

- 1 Are competent and credible project management structures in place?
- 2 Does the managing organisation have the skills needed to engage with young people?
- 3 Are young people represented on the scheme steering group?
- 4 Have adequate links been made with local key stakeholders and agencies to ensure that there are appropriate community activities for young people to undertake?
- 5 Are there resources to employ dedicated project workers?
- 6 If volunteers are involved, is there support in place to recruit and retain them?
- 7 What training is required to ensure that there is a common understanding amongst those operating the scheme?
- 8 Is there an agreed framework to ensure that there is clarity and consistency in the application of rewards?
- 9 How can the scheme maximise the range of rewards available and utilise the capacity and resources of partner organisations?
- 10 What strategies and plans have been established to ensure that the scheme is sustainable and able to access longer-term funding?

Maintaining interest of young people

While recruitment of young people may not be initially problematic, sustaining interest can prove to be more difficult. The employment of dedicated project staff is a critical influence on whether schemes are successful in attracting young people to participate and will also assist in ensuring that the scheme is sufficiently flexible to craft rewards to meet the specific needs of the young people involved at any one time.

In the evaluation of the two schemes the following factors were found to be instrumental in influencing the continued engagement of young people.

Key factors in maintaining engagement by young people

- Maximising recruitment of young people, by working in partnership with local schools and youth organisations to promote the scheme.
- Schemes need to retain flexibility and the ability to change in response to young people's views and needs.
- Activities need to be credible, taking into account age and gender differences.
- While financial rewards alone are not sufficient to generate a commitment to participate in pro-social activities, if the reward is deemed to be too minimal or tokenistic this will act as a disincentive to participation by others.
- It should be recognised that activities may be valued for reasons other than monetary reward – including public recognition of contribution, personal relationships, increased self-esteem and enhanced skills which may lead to increased opportunities for paid employment, training etc.
- The style and approach of project staff can be critical in gaining the confidence of young people, adult residents and volunteers.

Managing the public profile of schemes

Schemes benefit from high public profile events. Gaining local press coverage for activities and arranging public presentations not only provides participants with recognition that their activities and contributions are valued but can also help promote the scheme within the local community and contribute towards building greater tolerance of the visible presence of young people.

Publicity and marketing

- How will the scheme formally and publicly recognise participants' activities and contributions?
- Prior to marketing and profiling the scheme locally, is it clear exactly what rewards will be employed?
- Could the scheme link activities and rewards to formal accreditation and qualifications?
- How could the scheme attract a wide range of partners, for example to include local businesses and transport providers?

Overview – key good practice points

The following checklist sets out an overview of the key good practice principles and points which may provide a valuable framework for designing and evaluating reward schemes.

Key good practice points

- Ensure young people understand the aims and role of organisations involved.
- Involve young people at all stages of design, implementation, review and evaluation.
- Have explicit aims for the scheme and clear rules of eligibility criteria and assessment.
- Set realistic expectations of required behaviour.
- Provide interesting and meaningful activities, both for gaining rewards and then utilising rewards.
- Provide a mix of individual and collective rewards.
- Ensure that assessments of behaviour are consistent and transparently applied.
- Overcome logistical barriers to participation such as timing of activities and transport access.

(Continued)

- Ensure activities and rewards are accessible to all (e.g. those in rural areas or without internet access).
- Consider whether reward schemes should be extended to others (e.g. adults).
- Recognise the need to provide different activities and/or rewards for different age groups.
- Maximise the opportunity for ineligible individuals to gain or regain eligibility for rewards.
- Provide proactive additional support to enable young people to meet expectations of required behaviour.

Notes

Chapter 1

- 1 Royds staff commented that a low response rate was not unexpected since this had occurred in previous surveys in the area.

Chapter 5

- 1 As discussed previously, this resource allocation was much smaller in York, comprising the costs of the actual rewards and a small percentage of time for one staff member; staffing provision in Bradford was significantly higher.

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Appendix: Methodology

This report is based on data collected during a 20-month period from February 2005 to September 2006 in each of the two areas within which the schemes operated (New Earswick in York and the three estates in Wyke, South Bradford). The research was based on six main methods of data collection:

- 1 *Consultation and mapping exercise on existing reward schemes* involving a small-scale mapping exercise of reward schemes in operation in England and Wales, and a 'study visit' to a well-established Dreamscheme in Cumbria. Details can be found in our Interim Evaluation Report (Formby *et al.*, 2005).
- 2 *Critical literature review on reward schemes and associated policy developments.*
- 3 *Individual, group and/or telephone interviews and meeting observations with key staff and stakeholders in both scheme areas*, including paid scheme staff, volunteer scheme supervisors, associated staff and/or volunteers, and parents of scheme members. Areas discussed included details about the operation of the schemes; the background to its development; the local context of the scheme; key aims and objectives; progress to date; and insights on the experiences of being a supervisor.
- 4 *Data collection activities with scheme members in each area*, including photographic research methods and small discussion groups. Issues discussed included young people's experiences of the local area; initial perceptions of the scheme; experiences of subsequent participation; details on operation of the scheme; incentives and outcomes; potential reasons for low participation (in York); reward schemes in general; and recommendations for change.
- 5 *Focus groups with non-participants in both scheme areas*, via local primary and secondary schools. The groups debated popular images and perceptions of young people; meanings and understandings of community action/civic engagement; experiences of involvement in community action/civic engagement; perceptions and understandings of the local scheme; knowledge of its operation; views on incentives and potential outcomes; reward schemes in general; views on youth ASB; and recommendations for changes to the schemes. The decision to include non-participants was key to aiding our attempt to understand why the York scheme was struggling to recruit and retain members, and was also a factor raised in our literature review. Most interview and group discussion data from stages 3 to 5 were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and subsequently analysed.

- 6 *Surveys of residents' experiences and views in each area*, via distribution to a random sample of approximately one third of all households in each area (400 in New Earswick, York, and 360 combined in Delph Hill and St Mary's/Shirley Manor in Bradford), by young people involved in the two schemes. The surveys sought to gain a more complete picture of the local contexts in which the two schemes operated, in particular residents' assessments of young people's conduct and their experiences of any anti-social behaviour involving young people during the previous 12 months. One adult over 18 years of age per household was asked to complete the questionnaire and return it using a freepost envelope provided. Response rates were 35 per cent in York and 8 per cent (combined) in Bradford. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS.