

# Youth Access Strategic plan 2008 - 2012



## Who we are:

- the national experts in young people's information, advice, counselling and support services (YIACS)
- recognised for our commitment to good practice and quality
- a national membership network of local YIACS



## Our aims:

**Practice** - Promoting and developing the best quality information, advice, counselling and support services to young people

**Access** - Developing and improving young people's access to information, advice and counselling services

**Policy** - Shaping and influencing national, regional and local policy impacting on information, advice, counselling and support services

**Membership** - Securing a vibrant, national membership supported by a network of other partners and stakeholders

# Our services

- Setting national standards through our own national quality standards and providing information about their relationship to other national standards
- Developing managers and practitioners through training and workshops
- Building evidence of young people's needs and the outcomes and impact of advice and counselling through research and innovation
- Providing information and resources through a national online database of YIACS, regular policy briefings and specialist publications
- Advocating for YIACS and their users through contributions to national, regional and local policy and planning
- Contributing to the improved integration of policy and practice through partnerships and networks across the youth, advice, counselling and mental health sectors
- Bringing tangible benefits to members through discounts and access to special deals



# Our stakeholders: our impact

*"I am glad that Youth Access has such a high profile nationally...I like the work it's doing in influencing national policy makers."*  
(Youth Access Member).

*"If we want to know anything, there is someone to help. (Membership) gives credibility to your own service."*  
(Youth Access member)

*"A perfect balance between hard statistical research data, qualitative evidence and great presentations on models of good practice"*

(Mandy Wilkins, Young People's Legal Advice Project Manager, Law Centres Federation)

## Our members

## Parents and carers

## National and local partner organisations

## Government bodies

## Professionals

*"I appreciated the opportunity to hear directly from those advising and supporting young people about the challenges that they face in meeting the needs of this very important client group."*

(Amanda Finlay, Director, Legal Aid Strategy, DCA)

## Young people

*"An excellent course – well presented and supported by a well researched and thought out pack of material that we will use to support the development of our project."*

(Training participant).

*"I hit rock bottom. Nobody wanted to listen to me and it's only since coming to this YIAC, I could get my life back."*

(Young person talking about counselling at a YIAC)

# Information, advice, counselling and support.

## **INFORMATION**

The provision of systems and processes which make comprehensive, up-to-date and accessible information available to young people. There is no assessment or recommendation about the information's appropriateness, and decisions, choices and action are left with the young person. Information work can include signposting to other services or providing young people with resources to discover their own answers to their questions and needs.

## **ADVICE**

Advice is concerned with helping a young person to change or cope with practical issues and problems. It seeks to widen the young person's choices by providing accurate and relevant information about their rights, options and potential courses of action. The advice worker may identify and recommend ways forward, but decisions and choices are left to the young person. Any action agreed by the young person may be undertaken by, with, or on behalf of the young person.

## **COUNSELLING**

Counselling is an activity voluntarily entered into by a young person who wants to explore and understand issues in their lives which may be causing difficulty, pain and/or confusion. The boundaries of the relationship are identified and an explicit contract agreed between the young person and the counsellor. The aim is to assist the young person to achieve a greater understanding of themselves and their relationship to their world; to create a greater awareness of their personal resources. and of their ability to affect and cope with their life.

## **PERSONAL SUPPORT**

This is a general term which embraces a range of helping activities, including befriending and both individual and groupwork. The activities are frequently aimed at reducing a young person's sense of social and personal isolation and may provide help with practical needs such as independent living skills.