



**Evaluation of
Do it 4 Real 2006**

Final Report

November 2006

GEN Consulting

CONTENTS

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2 | KEY FINDINGS FROM 2004 | 3 |
| 3 | KEY FINDINGS FROM 2005 | 9 |
| 4 | PROGRAMME OPERATION | 12 |
| 5 | THE 2006 DO IT 4 REAL PROGRAMME | 22 |
| 6 | CONCLUSIONS | 40 |

1. INTRODUCTION

In July 2004 GEN Consulting was appointed by the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) to undertake an evaluation of the Do it 4 Real programme, previously known as Get Real. This report contains the findings from the third and final year of the evaluation. It covers the activities that took place during the summer of 2006. Furthermore, in order to provide some insight into the overall effectiveness of the three year programme, the findings from the 2004 and 2005 evaluations are cited throughout the report.

1.1 Background

The Do it 4 Real programme, previously known as Get Real, aims to provide structured residential experiences during the school holiday period for young people aged 11 to 17. In devising the programme, the policy direction from the DfES was to provide residential courses for a wide range of young people, on the assumption that these are beneficial. Big Lottery Fund further developed the programme by devising a range of outcomes or benefits that might result from young people's participation in Get REAL courses.

The programme is targeted at young people from a variety of backgrounds with the intention of increasing connections among young people from different social groups and providing a memorable experience which:

- assists young people to learn through active adventure
- improves life skills and social skills
- increases awareness of own learning skills
- supports the development of community and social values.

The programme was also intended to increase the visibility of residential programmes and promote their benefits.

The Get REAL programme was first piloted in the summer of 2003 and provided places for 1,640 young people from three areas of England. The pilot was jointly managed by the New Opportunities Fund, (the predecessor to the Big Lottery Fund) and the Department for Education and Skills. This pilot established that there was a demand for, and benefits from, structured holiday time residential experiences for young people aged 11-17. This pilot was extended to 2004 to cover a wider range of geographical areas with the intention that a national Get REAL programme would be rolled out across England in the following 2 years.

The extension of the pilot into 2004 allowed the Fund to further test the programme, with a particular focus on the social mix achieved and the impact of this on the experience of young people participating in the programme. The principal objectives of the pilot programme were to assess:

- the demand for a programme of this type and capacity of providers to meet this demand;
- the contribution that parents of young people were prepared to pay and the level of subsidy required;
- the short-term outcomes for the young people involved; and
- the extent to which the full social mix of young people was reached and what impact this social mix had on the experience.

The outcomes achieved by the pilot led to the decision to roll out the programme across England in 2005 and 2006. This was supported by an allocation of £11.5 million from The Big Lottery Fund from their £200m Young People's Fund.

1.2 Report Structure

Separate reports were produced for the 2004 and 2005 evaluations. The first 2 chapters of this report summarise the key points. The report is structured as follows:

- **chapter two** provides an overview of the findings from the 2004 evaluation
- **chapter three** provides an overview of the findings from the 2005 evaluation
- **chapter four** reviews the operation of the programme in 2006
- **chapter five** sets out the findings from our case study visits to 8 Do it 4 Real summer camps. This covers the views of YHA staff, activity providers and the young people participating in the 2006 programme
- **chapter six** details our overall conclusions on the operation and effectiveness of the Do it 4 Real programme over the 3 year period.

2. KEY FINDINGS FROM 2004

This chapter reviews the key findings from the 2004 Get REAL evaluation. It covers:

- the operation of the 2004 programme
- the findings from the survey of young people who participated in the 2004 programme
- the findings from the survey of parents in 2004.

2.1 Operation of the 2004 Programme

The 2004 Get REAL programme was based on the pilot programme run in 2003. The decision to roll the programme out in 2004 was taken relatively late, resulting in the 2004 programme being treated as a second pilot with the full roll-out of the programme scheduled for 2005 and 2006. The main changes from the programme run in 2003 were a much wider geographical coverage and a simplification of the charges for participation.

Due to the short timescales available to get the programme up and running in 2004, the approach taken was to continue to work with the 6 providers from the pilot programme. These were felt to represent a good mix of providers as they came from both the voluntary and private sectors; from a variety of perspectives or backgrounds; offered a wide range of activities; and enabled young people from many areas across England to benefit from Get REAL. The six providers are outlined in Table 2.1 overleaf.

Table 2.1 – 2004 Get REAL Providers

| Provider Name | Background | Sector | Target Areas for Recruitment |
|---|--------------------|---------------|--|
| Active Training and Education Trust (ATE) | Education | Voluntary | Sheffield Northumberland Bristol Leicestershire |
| Brathay Hall Trust | Outdoor Education | Voluntary | Lancashire Manchester Merseyside |
| BTCV | Conservation | Voluntary | Shropshire Staffordshire Birmingham |
| Exsportise | Sports | Private | Kent Sussex Hampshire Dorset |
| The Outward Bound Trust | Outdoor Activities | Voluntary | West Yorkshire |
| PGL Travel Ltd | Activity holidays | Private | Norfolk Suffolk Tyne and Wear Cleveland Durham |

The providers used a range of locations to deliver the courses offered. These were either facilities owned by the provider or leased by them to enable them to deliver the additional courses funded through Get REAL. In these cases the provider hired the facility only and retained full responsibility for delivery of the course and accommodation and care of the young people attending. One provider, Brathay, subcontracted the delivery of some courses to another provider with whom they had a pre-existing relationship (YMCA). In this case while Brathay retained overall responsibility, YMCA had responsibility for delivery of the courses and accommodation and care of the participants.

The six 2004 providers had to meet two measurable targets. These were:

- a specified number of young people taking part
- 20 percent of participants to be from low income households in receipt of means-tested benefits.

Table 2.2: Number of participants

| | ATE | Brathay | BTCV | Exsportise | Outward Bound | PGL |
|---------------|-----|---------|------|------------|---------------|-----|
| Target | 320 | 540 | 100 | 360 | 500 | 600 |
| Actual | 276 | 165 | 84 | 360 | 490 | 586 |
| % | 86% | 30% | 84% | 100% | 98% | 98% |

The target for the number of young people attending Get REAL courses was negotiated with the individual providers. Only one of the providers, Exsportise, met their target. However of the other five providers, four came very near to meeting the target set. The providers appear to have had most problems recruiting for the early courses, indicating that the short timescale was a key factor in their shortfall in participant numbers.

Brathay was the only provider to fall far short of their target of 540 participants over the summer. Brathay had a strong track record of providing residential courses for young people but had no experience of recruiting individual participants. They provided their courses for pre-arranged groups such as youth clubs and schools and as such did not have pre-existing marketing expertise and capacity within the organisation. Furthermore, their networks tended to be focused around other organisations and did not provide them with good opportunities to market their Get REAL courses to individuals.

All providers exceeded the target of 20 percent of young people participating to be from low income households in receipt of means-tested benefits. Overall 45 percent of young people participating in Get REAL were from households in receipt of means-tested benefits. Within this there was a range among providers from around 30 percent to 85 percent. The two private sector providers, while exceeding the target, had the lowest proportion of young people from these low income backgrounds.

Table 2.3: Percentage of Participants from Families on Means-Tested Benefits

| Provider | Percentage |
|---------------|------------|
| ATE | 85 |
| Brathay | 64 |
| BTCV | 76 |
| Exsportise | 30 |
| Outward Bound | 36 |
| PGL | 31 |
| Total | 45 |

It appears that the target of 20 percent of young people from low income backgrounds was easily achievable to the providers. It should be noted that parents were asked to indicate whether they were on means tested benefits but were not required to provide proof of this nor were these claims checked.

However, there was no indication in our discussions with providers or during the telephone surveys that false claims of being on means tested benefits was an issue.

Providers reported that the £25 rate for those families on means tested benefits was key to encouraging young people from this background to take part. However, the figures for different providers also indicate that the type of provision offered, the geographical areas targeted and the recruitment and marketing strategies pursued may also have a noticeable impact. Outward Bound and Brathay both tried to focus their recruitment efforts on areas with concentrations of disadvantage.

2.2 Findings from the 2004 Participant Survey

A follow-up survey was undertaken with 2004 Get REAL participants. This took the form of a self-completion questionnaire that was distributed to participating children at the end of the week-long residential course. Overall, 1,052 children responded to the survey, which reflected a response rate of 54%. They were spread across each of the six providers, with larger overall numbers of responses from PGL, Outward Bound and Exsportise participants. The key messages from the survey were:

- a significant proportion of the participants came from socially excluded backgrounds, with 21% residing in households where no-one was in paid employment
- the most common activities taken part in were outdoor pursuits and sports
- most respondents found out about the programme through parents, friends or teachers, for the most part going on the programme because it sounded like fun and due to a desire to meet new people
- a significant number (27%) had never taken part in any similar kind of activity before.

In terms of their experiences of the programme:

- 74% of respondents said it was fun
- 27% had not done any similar activity before, with people from lower income backgrounds less likely to have taken part in this kind of activity in the past
- participants commonly reported having met new people (this was particularly the case amongst those who were from excluded backgrounds and were aged 16 or over)

- those who had met new people generally thought those people were different to the sort of people they would normally have mixed with, and that the other participants on the programme were from different backgrounds and areas (participants aged 16 or over were more likely to think the others on the programme were different)
- respondents had generally got on well with the other people on the programme.

Participants most commonly reported gaining the following benefits from the programme:

- meeting new people;
- learning new skills; and
- building more confidence.

Participants aged 16 or over were more likely to have learned new things about themselves, become more in control of themselves and were more willing to take the lead on things than before. This was perhaps not surprising, as there were areas in which those aged 16 or over would be expected to improve more than younger age groups.

2.3 Survey of Parents

A total of 198 parents were interviewed as part of the 2004 parents survey. Of the parents interviewed, 56% had paid £100 for their child to attend and 44% had paid £25. The key messages from the survey were:

- the most common reasons for parents to encourage participation were to enable their child to have fun (79%), to get their child to meet new people (52%) and to get the child to experience time away from home (52%). The least common was to help the child gain independence (1%)
- the majority of parents (89%) perceived that their children had had fun on the course;
- there was no relationship between the placement cost or age of child and perceived enjoyment
- the majority of parents felt that their children had become more confident (72%), more able to work in a group (66%) and more understanding of young people (65%)

- 36% of parents felt that the programme had made their child perform better at school. However only 17% thought that their child was less likely to get into trouble as a result of the programme

In terms of parents views on their child's future participation in the Get REAL programme:

- parents who had paid £25 for a place were more likely (91%) than those that had paid £100 (83%) to encourage their children to take part again
- with regard to income, the highest percentage of parents to state that they would encourage their child to attend was in the lowest income group (91%) with total monthly family income of less than £1000
- parents with children in the 9-13 years age group were more likely (89%) than any other to encourage repeat participation.
- the majority of those parents who had paid £25 for a place (60%), felt that between 11-13 years was the best age for participation, whereas only 49% of those who had paid £100 stated this age as preferred
- the most common age selected across all income groups was the 11-13 year group
- parents of children in the 16 plus age group thought that the most appropriate ages were either before children start secondary school or between 14-16 years (36%).

3. KEY FINDINGS FROM 2005

This chapter reviews the key findings from the 2005 Do it 4 Real evaluation. It covers:

- the operation of the 2005 programme
- the findings from the survey of young people who participated in the 2005 programme
- the findings from the survey of parents.

The latter two are set out here as the 2006 element did not contain similar survey work. That said, given the similarity of the programme we have no reason to assume similar benefits would not accrue.

3.1 Operation of the 2005 Programme

The programme was delivered solely by the YHA in 2005. Their involvement is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. YHA stated that they expected at least 10,500 young people to take part in a Do it 4 Real course in 2005. A total of 8,803 young people participated in Do it 4 Real courses in 2005; a figure which equates to 84 percent of the target. Over 11,000 applications were received resulting in 9,071 bookings being made. Only 268 cancellations were received, less than 3 percent of the total number of bookings.

With regards to age profile, the vast majority of the young people taking part were 14 years or under with:

- 39 percent aged 11 to 12 years
- 40 percent aged 13 to 14 years
- 21 percent aged 15 to 17 years.

In common with the 2006 programme, YHA asked parents and others booking young people onto the courses to specify if one or more factors which can be linked to disadvantage applied to the young person:

- in 25 percent of cases (2,177) the young person came from a low income background (Income support, free school meals or Housing Benefit recipients)
- in 10 percent of cases (903) the young person came from a BME background

- one percent (109) of young people were registered disabled
- just over one percent (120) of young people had English as a second language
- in four percent of cases (372) the young person was referred by a third party such as Connexions, Social Services, Youth Offending Teams and family support groups.

In total, this represent 42 percent of participants in the 2005 Do it 4 Real programme. However, some individuals could tick more than one box. Adjusting for this the reporting of social disadvantage indicated that many participants were subject to more than one form of social disadvantage. Overall, the number of participants recording one or more social disadvantage amounted to 32% of the total participants in 2005.

3.2 Findings from the 2005 Participant Survey

The survey was conducted 3 months after the participants finished their course to allow them time to reflect on their experiences. Overall 397 participants were interviewed. Interviews were conducted over the telephone and were around 20 minutes in length. Telephone interviewers followed a set questionnaire which had been devised by GEN Consulting and approved by the Big Lottery Fund. Participants were selected to represent the proportion of activity across each provider, with individual participants then contacted at random. The key messages from the survey were:

- the majority of 2005 participants appeared to be from higher income backgrounds
- most of the participants took part because the programme sounded like fun
- the outcomes amongst participants were generally very positive; however those from lower income backgrounds were more likely to have had a negative experience
- the majority of participants said that they would remember the experience for the rest of their lives
- Do it 4 Real appeared to be introducing the majority of participants to people other than their own friends
- however, most youngsters on the programme were spending time with the same type of people that they normally would. By this it was meant that young people tended to seek out those who were similar in socio-economic characteristics to their peers back home.

3.3 Survey of Parents

A survey of the parents of young people who participated on the programme was undertaken in 2005. A total of 328 parents were interviewed as part of the survey. These were identified in the same way as the young people, and where possible a parent and young person from the same household were interviewed.

The main findings to emerge from the survey were:

- the most common reasons for parents to encourage participation were to enable their child to have fun (74%), to get their child to learn new things (43%) and to get their child to do new things (41%)
- the majority of parents (81%) perceived that their children had had fun on the course. There were no notable differences across age groups, amount paid and household income
- the majority of parents felt that their children had become more self aware (77%), had developed a better understanding of other young people (77%), become more confident (76%) and learned new skills (74%) as a result of their participation on Do it 4 Real
- some 41% said their child was (about three months after participating in the 2005 programme) performing better at school than before, and 19% felt their children were less likely to get into trouble
- parents from lower income families were more likely than other groups to perceive a positive impact on child development as arising from the input of instructors
- parents who paid £25 for their child to participate were more likely to think that their child had benefited a lot (83%) than those who paid £100 (67%)
- with regard to income, the highest percentage of parents to state that they would definitely encourage their child to attend was in the lowest income group (96%)
- the majority of parents stated that the ideal age for children to participate was between the ages of 11-13 years old (63%).

4. PROGRAMME OPERATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how the programme operated across England in 2006. It covers:

- key aspects of delivery, in particular variations from 2004 and 2005
- the activities offered
- the scale of activity
- the nature of the beneficiaries.

4.2 Key Aspects of Delivery

The Big Lottery Fund was responsible for the financial management and of the Do It 4 Real programme, and therefore has an overseeing responsibility for its delivery. As Get REAL, this programme was piloted in 2003 and then a three year programme was launched in 2004.

During 2004 Big Lottery Fund decided to seek a single organisation to manage and deliver the rebranded programme in 2005 and 2006. The experience of running the Get REAL programme in 2003 and 2004 led Big Lottery Fund to believe that a single provider would be best placed to develop an attractive programme, market it effectively and recruit the large numbers required to meet targets. YHA was selected from those who tendered to run the programme in December 2004.

Once YHA was selected the Big Lottery Fund's role was focused on agreeing the contract, including the reporting required, and monitoring YHA's management and delivery of the programme.

4.2.1 YHA Involvement

YHA were very positive about the Do It 4 Real programme and the opportunities that it offered not only for young people but for organisations such as themselves which had a track record of working with young people and wanted to develop this further. YHA's involvement with Do It 4 Real fitted well with their aims and objectives and the programme was similar to many of their current activities. Importantly, given the scale of the programme to be delivered in 2005 and 2006, YHA believed that they had the scope and management capacity to deliver a high quality programme. YHA felt they could add value to the programme given their ethos and track record; the commitment to developing people; the high calibre of their staff

and the professionalism of the organisation. As a large organisation YHA could draw on a wide range of skills and experience and where they did not have the expertise required in-house, they already had existing relationships which could assist such as that with Camp Counsellors USA.

Involvement in Do It 4 Real was also attractive to YHA as it provided them with an opportunity to develop an area of their activities that they had been wanting to for a while but lacked the resources to do so. Key features of the Do It 4 Real programme that appealed to YHA were the level of financial resources available for the programme, and the opportunity for hostels mostly involved in the group activities market during the year to use spare capacity in the summer months when they tend to be relatively quiet. YHA also saw the programme as a way to increase the number and range of young people coming into hostels and hopefully becoming a market for the future. This was to be supported by giving all young people going on Do It 4 Real courses a free family membership.

4.2.2 YHA Management Structure

YHA established a management team of senior staff to develop, manage and deliver the Do it 4 REAL programme. All staff involved had extensive experience of YHA and of developing and delivering new activities. This team worked closely together and included the following roles:

- Programme Manager – responsible for the development and delivery of the course programme, including identifying specialist providers
- Promotions Manager – responsible for marketing, communications and recruitment of young people to the courses
- Personnel Manager – seconded for six months to assist with the recruitment and induction of new staff to deliver the programme
- Fundraising Manager who maintained an involvement in all aspects of the programme.

This team has managed the delivery of the programme at a national level, including liaising with delivery staff at a local level and monitoring progress and performance.

4.2.3 Delivery Structure and Approach

Below this national management team YHA established a local delivery structure comprised of three elements: accommodation and food; pastoral care; and activity provision. This equates to *three sets of staff working together but with distinctive roles*.

In each hostel involved, the existing *hostel managers* and staff are responsible for providing accommodation and catering for the young people attending courses.

This practical role of the hostel staff is complemented by *pastoral staff* specially recruited for the Do It 4 Real programme. There was at least one Head Counsellor or Group Leader at each hostel with a staff group, each of whom had responsibility for a group of eight young people. This staff group were responsible for the welfare of the young people and ensuring that all got as much out of the experience of the course as possible. They stayed with the young people at all times, including during the journey to and from the course. This group of staff played a key role in ensuring that young people had a positive experience and that good standards of behaviour were maintained. They worked closely with the hostel staff and also with those providing the particular activities.

The pastoral staff recruited for this programme all had at least one season's experience of working in residential activity camps for young people. YHA worked with Camp Counsellors USA to recruit suitable and experienced staff. Those recruited were from a wide range of backgrounds with a considerable number being from countries other than the UK, particularly Eastern Europe and Australia.

All pastoral staff underwent two weeks of training to prepare them for six weeks of delivering residential activity courses and engaging with young people from a wide range of backgrounds. The training provided included:

- induction to YHA
- first aid
- team building
- innovative practice
- developing and delivering evening activities
- coping skills for those working with children and young people.

The final group of staff involved in the delivery of the courses were *activity provider staff*. In a small number of cases these staff were employed by YHA, but in most cases they were from specialist activity providers working with YHA to deliver the courses. Activity provider staff were focused on the provision of the particular activity and pastoral staff were to work closely with them at all times.

The pastoral staff were central to the delivery of the Do It 4 Real courses. They remained with the young people at all times, providing support and encouragement not only in the formal activities but also in evening activities and interaction with the rest of the group. They also worked closely with hostel and activity provider staff and assisted them in dealing with any difficult behaviours or problematic situations.

4.2.4 Delivery of the 2006 Programme

In developing the 2006 programme YHA drew heavily on the positive experiences of 2005. As such the 2006 programme was much more of an evolution than a revolution.

One aspect which was a much larger factor in this year's programme was that those young people who had taken part in 2005 were not eligible for a subsidised place. Rather, this group were asked to pay a 'full rate' of £325 (plus another £25 if transport was required). This was also the price charged to those who sought to book places after all of the subsidised places were taken up.

To address the issue of non-eligibility for subsidy, while still wanting to encourage participation YHA sent a Christmas card to all of the 2005 participants outlining the situation. They also sent a brochure. We understand that a few dozen telephone calls were then received by YHA complaining about this situation, especially where parents had several children who wished to participate. This highlights both the positive experience young people had enjoyed and the price sensitivity of at least some segments of the market. Those parents at the lower end of the income scale appear to have found it more difficult to send their children to camp when the subsidy was not available.

The subsidised prices charged were as before at £100 and £25 (all inclusive of transport). The £25 rate was offered to those:

- from families in receipt of income support, housing / council tax benefit
- receiving free school meals
- who were looked after children (in care).

All other young people on the course were offered a place at £100 provided they had not been on the programme at a subsidised rate in 2004 or 2005. Places were available up to the capacity of the programme.

A second change was around the logistics of the programme. In particular the previous evaluation raised concerns about the length of time some young people had to spend in transit, to and from the camp. This was related to there being a single point to which all young people travelled before then being distributed to their respective camps.

By contrast this year YHA operated two hubs and distributed the activities across three geographic zones: the north, south and central. The programme of activities was divided so that the north mirrored the south, with a different set of activities offered in the central region. The intention was that people in the south would not travel to the north (or vice-versa), but rather would go to a site closer to their home (while not actually barring North-South travel, YHA strongly discouraged this by not offering transport).

A third development on last year was around the promotion of the programme to disadvantaged groups. YHA were concerned that by definition this group were hard to reach and so the general marketing of the programme would not filter through. They therefore sought to develop a series of relationships through national agencies and networks including the Black Environment Network, Connexions and other youth agencies. Some organisations were found to be more able to respond than others.

An interesting component of this approach was to offer each organisation a set number of discounted places. By doing so YHA were seeking to ensure that young people coming through these routes were given access to the full range of experiences. This was to address a series of issues from last year of these groups coming to the programme late and so being offered only places that others had not chosen. This raised a further issue as on occasion those young people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds were grouped together in the same location, and so did not benefit from mixing with others which was an intention of the programme.

4.3 The Activities Offered

The 2006 programme offered 14 courses at 37 delivery locations. This was an expansion on the 2005 programme which offered 13 courses at 23 locations. This increase reflected both the need to expand the number of places to deliver the higher target in 2006 and a desire to reduce the amount of travel undertaken by young people. Therefore, a parallel programme was offered at locations in the north and south of England. The geographical spread of camps was:

- 12 camps in the North
- 10 in the Central zone; and
- 15 in the South.

Table 4.1 provides a brief description of the courses offered in 2006.

Table 4.1 – 2006 Course Provision

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Multi-activity | Course offering a range of outdoor activities including kayaking, raft building, climbing, abseiling, hiking, mountain biking and gorge walking. Delivered from eight locations. |
| Dance & drama/musical Theatre | Course providing the opportunity to work with professional dancers and musicians to create new, original dance pieces and musical scores, as well as a visit to a local theatre. Delivered from one location. |
| Performing arts | Course providing the opportunity to work with professional actors on a wide variety of techniques as well as a backstage tour of the Theatre Royal and a chance to see a couple of West End theatre shows. Delivered from two locations. |
| Lights, camera, action! | Course providing the opportunity to work with experienced staff looking at TV and film production equipment, story lines, scripting, shooting schedules and also making a short film. Delivered from two locations. |
| Environmental action | Opportunity to experience conservation in action and learn new skills on real life conservation projects. Campers take part in night hikes, mountain walks and wildlife watches. Delivered from four locations. |
| Creative arts and crafts | Course providing an opportunity to undertake a variety of creative arts including painting and drawing, pottery, jewellery making and batique. Delivered from one location. |
| Quest | Course providing the opportunity to try climbing, caving, abseiling, archery and a chance to learn eco-bushcraft skills. Also includes a day trip to Alton Towers. Delivered from one location. |
| Alternative adventure | Course offering three sets of themed activities including Games without Frontiers, Urban Survival and Mission Impossible. Delivered from two locations. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Superweeks | Course providing a variety of activities across each week of the programme including robotics, singing, creative writing and story telling, and adventure games. Delivered from two locations. |
| Watersports plus | Course providing a week of activities on and off the water including sailing, kayaking, canoeing, windsurfing, raft building and mountain biking. Delivered from six locations. |
| Survival challenge | Course delivered in a remote location introducing techniques and skills needed to survive in the wild, including a night hike and camp. Delivered from four locations. |
| Football and Rugby (boys only camp) | Course to develop technique and skills supported by the theoretical aspects of football and rugby such as anatomy, physiology, nutrition and psychology as well as a tour of a professional club and ground and attendance at a match. Delivered from one location. |
| Sports active | Course offering a range of popular sports including basketball, baseball, cricket, golf, volleyball, football and swimming. Delivered from one location. |
| Go extreme | Course providing a range of extreme sports including paintballing, laser clay shooting, quad biking, go-karting and canoeing. Delivered from two locations. |

At application stage, young people were asked to nominate their first, second and third choice of activity programme. The vast majority (71%) attended their first choice of activity programme with 13% attending their second choice and 11% their third.

4.4 The Scale of Activity

The target for the 2006 programme was to have 12,000 beneficiaries. This was an increase from the 9,000 achieved in 2005, and in combination would achieve the programme target of 21,000.

The total number of participants in 2006 was reported by YHA as being 13,616. This comprised 490 young people who took part at Easter and 13,126 who took part in the summer. The Easter Do it 4 Real programme was smaller in scale than the summer programme as it involved a lower number of participants and was run at 6 locations as opposed to the 37 in summer. The activities delivered in Easter were broadly similar to those in summer.

It is encouraging that the level of participation is above the 12,000 target. Of those taking part:

- 3,528 paid £25
- 8,532 paid £100
- 1,781 paid full price.

This totals to 13,841 reflecting that 225 more bookings were made than were taken up. This reflects both cancellations of advance bookings, including third party organisations which paid for some places that they did not then fill. Third party referrals were made by social workers and other care professionals. In total, 290 different third party organisations made a total of 789 bookings.

Table 4.2 outlines the level of occupancy achieved by the 2006 Do it 4 Real programme. This year the YHA increased their capacity over and above what was required to fill all the Big Lottery funded places. This was in order to give those children who went last year the chance to do so again although they did not have access to a funded place. The key messages are:

- overall, course occupancy was 84% across the Easter and Summer Do it 4 Real programme
- the largest course programme, Multi-Activity, registered an occupancy rate of 86%
- Go Extreme, Quest and Rugby Union (boys only) registered the highest rates with each achieving over 95% occupancy
- Superweeks, Games Without Frontiers and Environmental Action registered the lowest occupancy rates.

Table 4.2 – Course Occupancy

| Activity | Total | Male Bookings | Female Bookings | Total Occupancy | % Occupancy |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Creative Arts & Crafts | 240 | 17 | 177 | 194 | 81% |
| Dance & Drama/Musical Theatre | 372 | 22 | 322 | 344 | 92% |
| Environmental Action | 426 | 114 | 158 | 272 | 64% |
| Film & media | 684 | 246 | 265 | 511 | 75% |
| Football | 165 | 147 | * | 147 | 89% |
| Games without Frontiers | 232 | 67 | 79 | 146 | 63% |
| Go Extreme | 732 | 413 | 309 | 722 | 99% |
| Mission Impossible | 232 | 124 | 103 | 227 | 98% |
| Multi-Activity | 6780 | 3287 | 2535 | 5822 | 86% |
| Performing Arts | 1240 | 159 | 699 | 858 | 69% |
| Quest | 576 | 278 | 286 | 564 | 98% |
| Rugby League | 55 | 38 | * | 38 | 69% |
| Rugby Union | 110 | 107 | * | 107 | 97% |
| Superweeks | 264 | 39 | 80 | 119 | 45% |
| Survival Skills | 1092 | 653 | 319 | 972 | 89% |
| Urban Challenge | 232 | 163 | 24 | 187 | 81% |
| Watersports | 2502 | 1134 | 1085 | 2219 | 89% |
| Total | 15934 | 7008 | 6441 | 13449 | 84% |

source: YHA

* these courses were boys only

4.5 The Nature of the Beneficiaries

Of the 13,616 bookings, 7,397 (54%) had one or more indicator of disadvantage. The indicators were:

- medical, which included conditions such as asthma, diabetes and diagnosed behavioural conditions like Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder¹ (ADHD). This accounted for 5,730 (42%) of total participants

¹ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a condition that becomes apparent in some children in the preschool and early school years. It is hard for these children to control their behavior and/or pay attention.

- low income – 3,088 (23%)
- ethnic minority – 1,189 (9%)
- disabled – 138 (1%)
- English as a second language – 129 (1%).

Of the 490 participants at the Easter camps 331 had one or more indicator of disadvantage, representing 68%. In summer the proportion was slightly less with 7066 of the 13,126 participants, representing 54%.

The inclusion of people with medical issues as disadvantaged clearly boosts the overall proportion. While a case can be made for this, it should also be recalled that the criteria for the heavily discounted (£25) places did not include this. If the medical group is excluded the proportion of participants from disadvantaged groups would fall by around half, much closer to the original 25% target.

There was a very even split between males and females. This demonstrates the progress that has been made in diversifying the range of activities from previous programmes such as football and rugby, which often appealed more to young men.

There was also a spread across the age ranges, albeit with a concentration between the ages of 12 and 14. Conversely, the programme appears to appeal much less to those aged 16 and over (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Participant profile

| Age | Male | Female | % by age | % Male | %Female |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| 11 | 1,110 | 809 | 14% | 58% | 42% |
| 12 | 1,579 | 1,431 | 22% | 52% | 48% |
| 13 | 1,705 | 1,506 | 24% | 53% | 47% |
| 14 | 1,325 | 1,297 | 19% | 51% | 49% |
| 15 | 849 | 883 | 13% | 49% | 51% |
| 16 | 329 | 402 | 5% | 45% | 55% |
| 17 | 96 | 91 | 1% | 51% | 49% |
| Unknown | 0 | 129 | 1% | 0% | 100% |
| Total | 7,068 | 6,548 | 100%* | 52% | 48% |

source: YHA

*Total does not sum to 100% due to rounding

5. THE 2006 DO IT 4 REAL PROGRAMME

5.1 Introduction

This chapter details the findings from GEN's visits to 8 Do it 4 Real summer camps in August 2006 and looks at the experiences and perceptions of the 3 main groups involved in the programmes:

- YHA hostel and Do it 4 Real Staff
- staff from specialist activity providers subcontracted to YHA to deliver particular course content
- young people on Do it 4 Real Courses.

The 8 delivery locations visited are detailed in the following table. The locations were selected to give a representative insight into how camps were operating across activity programmes and geographical locations. (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 – Case Study Visits

| Region | Camp | Activity Type |
|---------|---|--|
| North | Langdale Stainforth | Alternative Adventure Environmental Action |
| Central | Castleton Gradbach Mill Howells Llangollen | Quest (Outdoor activities) Dance & Drama/Musical Theatre Sports Active Multi-Activity |
| South | Calshot Truleigh Hill | Watersports Plus Alternative Adventure |

5.2 The Delivery Staff

The views of staff delivering the Do it 4 Real programme are presented in this section. The visits involved discussions with the following levels of staff:

- the YHA hostel manager (permanently employed by the YHA)
- the Do it 4 Real head counsellor (employed on a temporary contract for the duration of the programme)
- the Do it 4 Real general counsellors (also employed on temporary contracts)
- the activity provider management (employed by the sub-contracted activity provider)

- the activity instructors (employed by the sub-contracted activity provider).

Discussions were focused on:

- previous experience of staff in working with young people
- motivations for getting involved in Do it 4 Real
- the logistics of running the camps such as accommodation, travel and catering
- perceptions of the activities offered
- what has worked well with the Do it 4 Real programme
- what has not worked so well with the programme
- what benefits and impacts do the camps bring to young people
- how the camps could be made more effective in future.

5.2.1 Previous Experience

The vast majority of head counsellors spoken to had previous experience of working with young people. The most common form was time spent working at summer camps in the USA. Most general counsellors had at least one seasons worth of experience of this or had worked at camps run by other UK based providers. The more responsible nature of the head counsellor position meant they tended to have had more experience than the general counsellors. Several had worked at USA camps for several seasons or had previously worked in a similar head counsellor position.

All YHA counsellors receive at least one weeks training before commencing their employment at camp. The view from the general counsellors was that this had been beneficial, particularly when dealing with more difficult young people. However, a number of head counsellors expressed their concerns over the lack of experience of some general counsellors on their staff. The primary concerns were over several general counsellors' ability to deal with young people with particular behavioural issues such as ADHD and Asperger Syndrome². It was felt by the head counsellors that this was partly a recruitment issue and partly a training issue. The YHA had recruited some staff that did not have the right types of skills to handle difficult young

² Asperger syndrome is a form of autism, a condition that affects the way a person communicates and relates to others.

people, but also the weeks training did not contain enough guidance on how to deal with some of the more difficult situations counsellors may come across at camp.

It should be emphasised that the above comments apply only to a very small proportion of counsellors. In addition, head counsellors were referring to counsellors' ability to deal with the most testing situations they may come across at camp. The view was that this issue could be tackled in future by taking one or both of the following steps:

- recruiting general counsellors with some experience of working with young people with behavioural issues
- expanding the elements of the training which teach counsellors how to engage with young people with behavioural issues.

The international composition of the YHA staff complement was seen as a positive aspect of the camps by both staff and young people. With counsellors from Europe, the USA, Canada and Australasia, young people were said to enjoy learning about different cultures. It was felt the sense of being away from home and experiencing new things was heightened by meeting people from places they may have only seen on television.

The activity providers were experienced in working with young people. Some examples are listed below:

- Sport by Design delivered the activities at Langdale and Truleigh Hill. 2006 was the organisation's second year of involvement in Do it 4 Real
- STARS group delivered the activities at Howells and have experience of delivering similar activities to schools throughout the rest of the year
- Pro-active Adventure was the activity provider at Llangollen and have experience of delivering to children, including those excluded from schools, outside the summer period
- Calshot Activities Centre is a council run outdoor education centre. The activity instructors deliver outdoor education programmes to residential school groups.

Providers required their instructors to be properly qualified in the activities that they delivered to young people, with all having undergone appropriate training with their current employer.

5.2.2 Motivations

The main motivation for Do it 4 Real counsellors getting involved was the desire to work with young people. Several of the counsellors were training to be teachers (or were aiming to be accepted on to a teaching course) and were working at the Do it 4 Real camps in their summer vacation in order to gain relevant practical experience. The counsellors from outside the UK stated their desire to work with children, but also were motivated by the cultural experiences to be gained through working in England.

The opportunity to work specifically with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds was also cited as a big draw by counsellors. As stated previously, many had worked at camps in the USA where the young people attending camps were often from more affluent backgrounds. The chance to work with young people who may have never had the opportunity to experience a summer camp was something that many counsellors wanted to be a part of. Furthermore, the concept of contributing to a potentially life changing event in a young person's life (such as their first time away from home) was a motivating factor.

From the hostel managers' perspective, the Do it 4 Real summer camps were seen as a positive activity to be associated with. All the hostels visited were low occupancy hostels over the summer as they tended to cater for schools and other groups throughout the rest of the year. Therefore, participating in the programme kept the hostel busy outside the academic year and as such helped to maintain staff morale. Do it 4 Real was seen as a worthwhile programme which fitted with the YHA's charitable and business objectives. Indeed, one hostel manager stated she had transferred to a location delivering the Do it 4 Real programme as she wanted to be involved in the *'buzz it brings to a hostel'*.

The motivations of activity providers for getting involved in Do it 4 Real were business and ideological. From a business perspective, the activity provider management team highlighted their need to continue generating revenue over the summer holiday period when the schools were off. From the ideological side, provider management felt there was a natural fit between the ethos of Do it 4 Real and the ethos of their organisation. Do it 4 Real was a programme they actively wanted to be associated with.

5.2.3 Logistics

The organisation and delivery of the Do it 4 Real programme was reported to have gone relatively smoothly according to YHA staff and activity providers. The first week was said to be the most difficult by YHA staff as they:

- were unsure of the types of young people they would be working with
- were unsure of the capabilities of the activity providers they would be working with
- had little or no experience of the activities being delivered at camp.

In addition, YHA staff reported a learning curve in receiving and settling in a large number of young people arriving at camp at the same time. This was particularly true of the larger camps such as Howells where around 300 children would arrive in one afternoon. These tasks became easier as the summer camps progressed and staff became more familiar with the workings of the programme.

Hostel managers reported no difficulties in accommodating and catering for the large numbers of young people Do it 4 Real brought to their hostel. Even where the delivery site was not a YHA hostel such as at Calshot (a local authority activity centre) and Howells (a boarding school), facilities staff stated how well the camps had ran over the summer. This was partly due to all locations having some experience of catering for large school groups throughout the rest of the year. Hostel managers felt the systems were already in place, allowing for an easy transition to hosting Do it 4 Real.

Do it 4 Real staff at a number of the camps reported some minor issues. These were:

- transporting young people long distances in order to take part in daytime activities. This was the case in Langdale where some days the children travelled 80 miles to North Yorkshire. This was seen as excessive by Do it 4 Real staff especially when there was a range of activity providers in the local area
- large dormitories caused some issues with settling young people down for the night. At camps such as Howells, dormitories could have as many as 12 young people in them. Older children in particular could be reluctant to go to bed at a set time and this could unsettle the rest of the group.

Although these issues were relatively small scale and did not interfere with the overall running of the camp, they were said to make the jobs of Do it 4 Real staff more difficult at times.

5.2.4 Perceptions of Activities Offered

It should be emphasised that the views expressed in this section are primarily the views of the YHA counsellors interviewed at the camps we visited. As such the section contains a degree of subjectivity. With this in mind, perceptions on the quality of activities delivered were influenced by four principal factors:

- the extent to which young people enjoyed the activities provided
- the innovation and variety in the weekly activity programme
- the extent to which activities challenged young people to think or act differently
- the competence and knowledge of the activity providers.

Most importantly YHA and activity provider staff wanted young people to have a fun and safe time when they came to camp. Central to this was the excitement and enjoyment generated by the main course provision. If young people became bored and uninterested in the activity programme, YHA staff reported more problems with rowdy behaviour. This was said to be the case at Truleigh Hill during the first 2 weeks of the summer programme when the activity provider delivered the 'Games without Frontiers' programme. YHA staff noted that as activities were similar to the types young people could play at home, such as dodgeball, the young people became bored quickly and more difficult to control, particularly the older children. For these reasons, the activity instructors at Truleigh Hill stated that if they were to run the camp again, they would not include the 'Games without Frontiers' programme. This highlights the importance of gearing activity programmes to the ages of young people attending.

Discussions with the activity providers highlighted the process used in designing the activity programme. When initially tendering for the delivery contract, providers generally presented several 'menus' of activities which they could deliver to the YHA. This was based on the activity providers' experience of delivering to other groups of young people and the technical competence of their instructors. The association then selected the activities it felt were most appropriate. At camp, the agreed programme was delivered with an element of flexibility built-in to allow for contingencies brought about by factors such as bad weather or groups refusing to do certain activities. In these cases, alternative individual activities were offered but the overall theme of the programme continued.

YHA staff viewed courses which had innovative activity programmes as positive. This also helped to keep young people interested and motivated throughout the week. Camps which offered more adrenaline based activities such as Calshot (Watersports Plus) and Llangollen (Multi-Activity) were viewed as particularly varied by the YHA staff working there. At these locations, few activities were repeated and young people got out into the surrounding areas in order to undertake the activities. In addition, the activities undertaken at these camps were ones which young people could not do on their own. Abseiling, gorge-walking, rock climbing and caving were given as examples of this. YHA staff felt young people enjoyed the activities that had an element of risk and which they had never tried before.

Conversely, YHA staff at camps such as Howells which offered more mainstream activities (football, volleyball, tennis) felt the 'normality' of these pursuits led to children getting bored more quickly. Furthermore, as all activities were delivered on-site at Howells, there was no need for children to leave the school grounds for the duration of their week stay. Although this made delivery simpler for the activity provider, YHA staff felt it could add to young people's feelings of repetition.

The range of activity programmes offered meant that different young people will be challenged in different ways. A common example given by YHA staff was the change in behaviour brought about by activities which required children to face a personal fear such as heights or water. A young person could be the informal leader of a group in activities where they felt confident such as playing football, often criticising team mates for poor performance. However, when that same individual was asked to abseil down a 40 foot climbing wall they became a very different person. They would often clam up and would require encouragement from YHA staff, instructors and other members of their group. YHA staff felt this type of experience was invaluable in teaching young people the value of putting themselves in another person's shoes. The way that young person felt on the abseil was the same as his team mates felt when they played football in his team.

Activities which encouraged team working were also highly regarded by YHA staff. This refers to tasks such as raft build and shelter build rather than team sports young people were familiar with. Team working activities required young people to work together to form a consensus on the best way to complete a task and to take other team members' views on board. Staff felt that this was useful as it helped to develop skills central to everyday life.

YHA staff at the special interest camps of Gradbach Mill (Dance and Drama) and Stainforth (Environmental Action) felt the activities offered at their respective camps were of a more educational nature than those offered elsewhere. During the week at Stainforth, young people were taught about the environment and the small changes they can make themselves to

minimise the damage they cause. Whereas Gradbach Mill helped to develop young people's skills in a range of performing arts. Staff felt the end result was young people leaving at the end of the week knowing a little bit more about an activity they were interested in.

Finally, YHA staff perceptions of activities were informed by the competence and knowledge of the activity providers they were working with. If activities were delivered in a professional, educational and fun way by the providers YHA staff tended to have a high degree of satisfaction with the activities offered. The best examples of this were to be seen at Calshot and Llangollen. At both these camps, the activity providers were qualified to deliver a range of regulated activities such as sailing, abseiling, rock climbing and dry-slope skiing. The providers also had extensive experience of delivering activities to school and youth groups. For these reasons, YHA staff felt that the providers were skilled in getting the most out of young people. They ensured young people had fun but also learned something at the same time. The view was that these activity providers were 'adding value' to the Do it 4 Real programme as they were delivering activities which YHA staff simply did not have the skills to do.

In contrast, at camps where providers were delivering less 'high risk' activities, the knowledge and competence of activity providers was seen as lower, and in turn activities were rated lower by YHA staff. Examples of this were evident at Truleigh Hill and Langdale. YHA staff felt that the activities being delivered were so mainstream that they themselves could have delivered them without the activity provider. An instance cited was the day trip to Thorpe Park³. At this event, YHA staff reported that it was too top heavy with YHA and activity provider staff with a ratio of around 3 children to 1 adult in the group. YHA staff commented that this was an activity they could have delivered without the provider as it simply involved supervising the children on a day out. Similarly, YHA staff commented on the activity provider's use of other activity providers. For example, if the young people were taken to paintball or go-karting, the staff employed by that company delivered the activity rather than the provider. Again, YHA staff felt this was something they themselves could have done.

5.2.5 What Has Worked Well with the Do it 4 Real Programme

Responses to this question varied across the camps visited, however there were a number of common themes around what has worked well. These were:

- the number of children Do it 4 Real has reached
- the 'level playing field' offered by Do it 4 Real

³ Thorpe Park is a theme park in the South East of England

- the social mix
- the working relationship between YHA staff and activity providers.

Both YHA and activity provider staff were united in their praise for the scale of the programme. The number of young people Do it 4 Real had reached, from all socio-economic backgrounds, was hailed as a key achievement of the programme. It was commented that through the offer of subsidised places, thousands of children from low income and/or disadvantaged backgrounds had been given the chance to have a holiday they would otherwise have missed out on.

The 'level playing field' offered by Do it 4 Real was also put forward as an aspect that had worked well by delivery staff. To explain, this concept has a number of elements:

- although young people can arrive at camp with friends from home, many arrive on their own without the 'labels' (positive and negative) they have to live with at home
- regardless of background, all young people attending camp have to learn to get along with one another
- all have to live by the same rules.

Activity instructors noted the differences in the way Do it 4 Real participants and school groups behaved. As children arrive from all over the country with Do it 4 Real, there is not the prefabricated group mentality which exists with school groups. Therefore, the influence of peer pressure on behaviour is removed with Do it 4 Real. Young people have to make an effort to interact with others they do not know, rather than hide within the comfort zone of their group. The result is that young people act in the ways they want to, rather than how other people expect them to.

Delivery staff were unsure whether the 40% mix of children with one or more disadvantage had been achieved. The difficulty was in the broad definition of disadvantage. Certain types of disadvantage such as behavioural issues were more visible than others, particularly health conditions like asthma. Head counsellors received copies of the Do it 4 Real application forms before young people arrived at camp. This detailed any conditions or issues the counsellors and activity providers should be aware of.

That said, YHA staff were able to observe the interaction of young people from different backgrounds. The general consensus was that the social mix had worked well. Central to this was the 'level playing field' concept outlined

above. Young people in dormitories and activity groups knew nothing about each other's background when they first met. Staff reported that although there can be some caution at first, this gradually faded as the week progressed. By the end of the week, the view was that most children attending camp will have made new friends and learned they have things in common with young people from different backgrounds to their own.

Regardless of what YHA staff felt about the standard of activities offered, the working relationship between staff and the activity providers was described as having worked well by both parties. Several of the activity instructors were singled out for praise by YHA staff for their willingness to do more than was required of them. For instance, some instructors would assist the YHA staff to organise the evening activities despite not being contracted to do so.

Similarly, activity providers appreciated how difficult the role of a YHA counsellor could be. The length of the YHA counsellors' day was commented on by several instructors as well as the issues in maintaining discipline in some groups. Activity instructors and YHA staff explained how they supported each other when maintaining discipline on activities and this was felt to work well in practice.

The activity provider at Calshot commented on how the participative role played by YHA staff had taught them how they could improve how they work with school groups. With the school groups Calshot usually work with, the teacher hands over the group to the instructor and then goes away for a coffee without participating in the activities. This was felt to be a mistake. The participation of YHA staff in the activities undertaken by young people has shown that shared experience has been a key element in the success of Do it 4 Real. This approach has helped to strengthen the bond between the counsellors and young people and will be something Calshot will be looking to implement with future school groups.

5.2.6 What Has Not Worked Well with the Do it Real Programme

Although there were no significant concerns about the operation of the 2006 Do it 4 Real programme, a number of points were raised regarding what had not gone so well. These were:

- the lack of time off for Do it 4 Real counsellors
- the gap between older and younger children
- the limited information YHA staff received prior to young people attending camp

- the ASDAN⁴ journals and certificates.

The majority of Do it 4 Real counsellors agreed they had an intense job. General counsellors were responsible for the pastoral care of the young people in their assigned group from when they rise in the morning until they go to bed again at night. The view was that this could take its toll, as apart from a Saturday night when counsellors are preparing for the next weeks intake to arrive, they do not get any formalised time away from the children. The belief was that individual counsellors would benefit if some time off was built into the programme. This way counsellors could continue to perform at an optimal level.

The interaction between those young people aged 16 and over and those aged 12 and below was highlighted as something that had not worked well on the course. The YHA staff observed that both groups were at different stages of adolescence and as such had little in common. This could lead to some disharmony particularly at bed time when the older teens wanted to stay up past the set time. More generally, some YHA staff suggested placing an age limit of 15 and below on the Do it 4 Real camps. In their experience, older teens were more like young adults and were less enthusiastic about the activities offered and abiding by the rules of the camp.

The limited information received on young people prior to arrival at camp was raised as a concern by a number of head counsellors. This was also raised as an issue in the 2005 evaluation of Do it 4 Real. The view was that the more information counsellors have, the easier it is to plan dormitory and activity groups as well as plan for anticipated problem behaviour. Specifically some head counsellors would liked to have known which children had paid £25, £100 and full rate to attend camp as it was felt this would help to gauge the level of disadvantage more accurately when making up groups.

Moreover, the standpoint of some counsellors was that certain young people were at the camps who should not have been there. These individuals were considered to have behavioural issues so severe that, in the opinion of some YHA staff, they were not suited to mixing at a mainstream camp with other children. This led some to comment that in a very small number of cases the Do it 4 Real camps were being used as a 'baby-sitting' service by social services or other third party referral organisations.

There were mixed views on the effectiveness of the ASDAN journals and certificates, however taken as a whole the view amongst YHA staff was that

⁴ The Adventure and Residential Award (ASDAN) involves young people completing a reflective journal during their time at camp. Upon completion of the journal the young person is presented with a certificate in recognition of the fact he or she has completed 30 hours of activity at a Do It 4 Real summer camp. This also serves to demonstrate the young person has exhibited the key skills of working with others, improving their own learning and performance and problem solving.

the journals had not worked especially well. There were a number of reasons given for this:

- for the most part, girls were more conscientious in completing their ASDAN journals than boys
- the ASDAN journals were seen as long winded and repetitive by some staff as they asked roughly the same questions every day
- the relevance of the ASDAN certificate was lost on younger children as they had little concept of its value in contributing to the GCSE
- the view that the ASDAN certificate became irrelevant after young people left camp.

The journals were seen as useful in that they encouraged young people to formally reflect on their experiences. However YHA staff and activity providers also explained how they both encouraged young people to reflect several times a day on an informal basis. There was no objection amongst staff to the principle of formally reflecting on activities, rather the debate was around whether ASDAN was the best tool to do it. One general counsellor had worked at another non case study Do it 4 Real camp and reported a 'spoof' awards ceremony at the end of the week. At this event, all the young people were given an award that meant something personal to them such as 'best climber', 'best team mate' or 'best dancer'. His view was that the young people responded to this more than the ASDAN certificate. The ceremony was personalised and fun whilst also encouraging reflection on the week's activities.

5.2.7 Benefits and Impacts

YHA and activity provider staff were agreed that the vast majority of children who had attended the case study Do it 4 Real camps had had a fun, safe and memorable experience. This assessment was based on two factors:

- the number of young people who had approached staff and told them how much they had enjoyed camp
- the number of children who stated their desire to come back on a Do it 4 Real programme next year.

Staff also cited a number of tangible benefits young people gained as a result of participating in Do it 4 Real. Amongst these were:

- for many young people attending, Do it 4 Real was their first experience of being away from home. Completing their week away required them to develop a level of independence and maturity

- young people had to learn to live in close proximity with others they had never met before and who were from different backgrounds
- young people developing skills which are relevant to real life. For example, arriving at camp and having to make new friends requires the same skills as starting a new school, sports team or other activity group
- increased self confidence gained through pushing themselves to achieve things they never thought they could. For example, sailing a boat or climbing a high wall. This was said to teach young people a valuable lesson about life in that sometimes you have push yourself to do things even when you do not want to
- young people discovering they are good at something they have never had the opportunity to try before. This also helps to build self confidence
- learning to work as part of a team, and to accept that there are stonger and weaker members in every team
- simply having a summer holiday their family might not have been able to provide had it not been for the subsidised Do it 4 Real places.

There was also the perception that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds gained greater benefit from the programme than those who were not. The main reason behind this comment was that disadvantaged young people, by and large, had never experienced anything like Do it 4 Real before. Indeed, some had never been on holiday. Delivery staff felt that the novelty of the camp and the enthusiasm of these young people for the activities provided meant that it was likely to be something they would remember for the rest of their lives.

With regards to the lasting impacts brought about through children attending a Do it 4 Real Camp, staff felt this was likely to be minimal. The general consensus was that regular intervention of this type was needed over a sustained period of time if long-term behaviour changes were to be achieved. Therefore activity providers with extensive experience of working with young people, were realistic about what they could achieve in 1 week. There was general consensus that young people benefited whilst at camp and for a period of time afterwards. However, there was also a view that these benefits would gradually fade if young people returned to an unsupportive or poor home environment.

The environmental action camp at Stainforth was considered by staff there to have the greatest potential in leaving a lasting impact on children. At this location, young people were taught how to behave responsibly towards the

environment. Delivery staff hoped this learning would stay with the children for the rest of their lives.

5.2.8 Improving Future Effectiveness of the Do it 4 Real Programme

Overall, the Do it 4 Real programme was said to have operated effectively by both YHA staff and activity providers. Indeed, one activity company director described Do it 4 Real as *'the best programme his company had ever been involved in'*. He gave a number of reasons for this including:

- the accessibility of the Do it 4 Real programme to children from all backgrounds
- the opportunities it gives to what he termed the 'grey kids'. This is defined as those children who are not doing particularly well but not doing particularly badly either. The average ones in the middle who often get forgotten about. In his opinion, the format of the Do it 4 Real programme was well suited to giving these types of young people the impetus needed to go on and improve.

A number of suggestions have been made throughout the chapter as to how staff feel the programme could be made more effective. These are summarised below along with a number of others:

- improved training for YHA counsellors. In particular, extending the elements which teach how to deal with children with behavioural problems
- allied to this, more in-depth assessment of children at application stage. Staff and activity providers understood that the ethos of Do it 4 Real was access to all, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, there were a number of young people at the camps who had problems so severe that their presence impacted on the enjoyment of other children
- head counsellors felt that receiving more in-depth information on the background of young people would help them to plan better and make contingencies for problem behaviour
- YHA staff felt that better utilisation of the local providers around hostels would reduce the travel time on some activities, which was excessive on some days
- extending the duration of the stay at camp from 1 week to 2 weeks. That said, there was a recognition that under resource constraints this may mean offering the programme to half the current number of

participants. The argument was that the longer time period could potentially increase the benefits for those taking part

- ensure all camps offer activities which young people cannot do on their own at home. YHA staff and activity providers felt that young people got the most out of activities which offered a 'break from the norm' or were unusual
- ensuring all foreign counsellors have a firm grasp of the English language. Although meeting counsellors from different cultures was said to be a positive aspect of the programme, bonding between young people and their assigned counsellor was said to suffer if the counsellor's grasp of English was insufficient to get on to the same 'wavelength' as the children
- some YHA counsellors felt that only those activity programmes which offer children a 'unique experience' as they termed it, should be delivered by Do it 4 Real. The view was that activities which were new to the young person and challenging were more effective than those they had done at home many times before.

5.3 The Young People

During the course of the case study visits GEN spoke with a total of 58 young people. This consisted of 23 females and 35 males. Fifty two were of white ethnic origin whilst 6 were from a black and minority ethnic (BME) group. Young people were selected randomly by the consultants with the assistance of the YHA counsellors and represented the range of ages from 11 to 17. Every effort was made to undertake the consultations with minimal disruption to young people's activities. Therefore, based on this approach, it happened that more males were available for interview than females. The discussions centred around:

- how they found out about the Do it 4 Real programme
- what they liked about the programme
- what they did not like about the programme
- what they had got out of the programme.

5.3.1 Finding out about the Do it 4 Real programme

The most common way that young people had found out about Do it 4 Real was through parents or guardians. This highlights the strong influence of care givers in identifying the opportunity. Other channels were:

- friends and relatives
- schools
- advertisement in YHA hostels
- mailshots from the YHA
- outdoor exhibitions
- the internet.

The majority of young people were attending their first choice camp. Reasons given for selecting the camps they did were:

- the young person had a special interest in that camp (in the case of Environmental Action and Dance & Drama)
- the activities offered looked fun
- the camp was close to home.

Even where young people were attending their second or third choice the feedback was positive, with many stating they were enjoying the activities more than they thought they would.

5.3.2 What Young People Liked About Do it 4 Real

Young people were asked what they liked and disliked about Do it 4 Real. Aspects of the programme they particularly enjoyed were:

- the YHA counsellors and activity instructors. Young people had a lot of good things to say about the staff looking after them, particularly their sense of fun
- making new friends
- doing fun and exciting activities all day
- the more 'extreme' activities like paintballing, assault courses and gorge walking
- the evening activities organised by the YHA staff
- being away from for a week (not all young people agreed with this)

With the exception of Gradbach Mill and Stainforth which were both special interest camps, the general message from the other camps was that 'extreme' activities were enjoyed most by young people. The main reason for this was that the majority of young people either had never done them before or could not easily access them at home. Young people said they can play football or go swimming anytime at home, however they never get the chance to walk up a gorge, abseil down a 40 foot wall or sail a boat. Only Do it 4 Real had given them these opportunities.

5.3.3 What Young People Did Not Like About Do it 4 Real

There were very few dislikes about the course reported by the younger children spoken to. The main dislikes about the camps were offered by the older teenagers (16 and 17 years old), chiefly girls. Some of the dislikes were:

- being treated like children instead of adults
- the early bedtime
- the food
- the lack of 'chill out' time. Some commented that there were too many activities, especially in the evening when they wanted to just chat with friends
- filling in the ASDAN journals (boys more than girls)
- some of the more 'boring' activities like orienteering and judo.

Older teenagers had more dislikes at camps such as Howells, where due to the Physical Education (PE) style format, it was felt to be repetitive and boring. In addition, the older group felt this camp was more suited to younger children as they have more energy and enthusiasm for the activities.

In summary, the answers to likes and dislikes did not differ significantly along gender lines. The only exception to this was the completion of the ASDAN journals with girls showing more enthusiasm for this task than boys. However there were some notable differences related to age. Younger children (under 13) tended to be more enthusiastic about the camps than older children (over 16). In addition, likes and dislikes were individual, with some disagreement in groups about which activities were best.

5.3.4 What Young People Had Got Out of Do it 4 Real

As outlined previously, girls enjoyed filling out their ASDAN journals more than boys. The main reason given by the boys was they did not like writing,

however it should be stressed there were exceptions to this rule. Some of the positives given by young people about the ASDAN journals were:

- it helped them to think about the skills and qualities used in certain activities
- it helped them to think about their home environment in comparison to camp
- the journal was well laid out and easy to fill in
- it gave them something to do if they started to get homesick.

In asking young people what they thought they had got out of Do it 4 Real the main points were:

- improved self-confidence from achieving things they thought they never could. Examples of this were abseiling when they had a fear of heights or taking part in a play
- trying things they had never tried before
- finding a new activity they liked and were good at
- learning to be away from home (for many it was their first time)
- making new friends from different parts of England and learning about where they came from
- having a great holiday

In addition, the majority of young people stated their desire to return to a Do it 4 Real camp next year. Indeed, for a number of young people this was their second time on the programme having also attended in 2005. With one or two exceptions, the vast majority had thoroughly enjoyed themselves and would look back on their time at camp with fond memories. Furthermore, of those who had been on other similar summer camps such as PGL, the Do it 4 Real camps were rated as superior primarily due to the better activities on offer.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter draws on the evidence presented in the body of the report and on the 2004 and 2005 evaluations. Particular attention is paid to the findings of 2005 and 2006 when the programme was fully operational. This chapter first sets out a number of conclusions about the operation of the Do it 4 Real programme over the 3 years of operation and then comments on its effectiveness in achieving its original objectives.

6.1 Conclusions about the operation of the programme

A number of conclusions can be drawn based on the range of evidence gathered in the 2005 and 2006 evaluations. These are:

- Do it 4 Real was successful in achieving its target of attracting 21,000 participants across 2005 and 2006. In total, 22,419 young people participated in the programme, with 21,131 of these at the subsidised rate of £25 or £100
- 32% of young people on the course had one or more indicator of disadvantage in 2005. In 2006, 54% of young people on the course had one or more indicator of disadvantage. This latter figure was above the target of 40%, but includes those with a wide range of medical issues who were previously not included. On these measures, the Do It 4 Real programme can be considered successful in offering a residential experience to young people with one or more indicator of disadvantage
- The vast majority of those taking part were new to the type of experience offered. The price charged appears to have been important in attracting this wider client group. Moreover, the option of taking part in a second year at full cost was a barrier for some – indicating a degree of price sensitivity
- the programme was seen as an enjoyable, fun and memorable experience by the vast majority of young people consulted in 2004, 2005 and 2006. This is supported by the survey work in 2004 and 2005 and the case study consultations with young people in each of the 3 years
- the majority of parents whose children had participated in Do it 4 Real felt that participation had been a positive experience for their child. In addition, the majority would encourage their child to take part in Do it 4 Real in future. This is supported by the parents survey undertaken in 2004 and 2005

- in each of the 3 years of evaluation, Do it 4 Real was seen as having operated effectively and having had a positive impact on young people by YHA staff
- similarly, activity providers were positive about the benefits of Do it 4 Real on the young people participating

6.2 Achievement of Objectives

The programme was established to assist the development of young people through giving them a memorable experience and encouraging them to mix with new people from a range of social backgrounds. Underlying this a number of specific objectives were set. These were:

- to assist young people to learn through active adventure
- to improve life skills and social skills
- to increase awareness of own learning skills
- to support the development of community and social values
- to increase the visibility of residential programmes and promote their benefits.

These are discussed in turn.

6.2.1 Assist young people to learn through active adventure

The survey and fieldwork evidence suggests that the programme has been successful in achieving this objective. The majority of young people participating in Do it 4 Real had learned something new during their stay at camp. Learning was multi-faceted and related to activities, places and people. Indeed, it appears it is the combination of these factors which is important. That said, we conclude that these benefits are greatest at the camps which offer the most adventurous or interesting activities. In particular, those which are different to those the young person can do at home.

6.2.2 Improve life skills and social skills

It can be concluded that Do it 4 Real has been successful in achieving this objective. The opportunity for young people to spend a week away from home in an environment where the majority of people are unknown to them necessitates the development of life and social skills. The bonding between young people themselves, and between staff and young people can be considered one of the key achievements of the programme.

Central to the development of these bonds were the team building exercises carried out as part of the activity programmes. Successful completion of these tasks relied on young people not only reaching a consensus on the best way forward, but also learning to respect points of view that were different from their own. These activities mirror the skills which young people can be expected to use regularly in adult life.

6.2.3 Increase awareness of own learning skills

The confidence building attributes of the programme lead us to conclude that this objective has largely been achieved. The evidence points to young people learning to successfully complete activities that they never thought possible. This in turn led to increased awareness of their capacity to learn the skills needed for new activities.

6.2.4 Support the development of community and social values

The success of the social mix on the programme leads us to conclude that this objective has also been accomplished. The 'level playing field' offered by Do it 4 Real meant that young people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds left their baggage behind and co-existed by the same rules for a week. In this sense, Do it 4 Real was successful in drawing young people from different geographical areas and social backgrounds. Moreover, friendships and understanding appear to have flourished across these boundaries. The result was a greater appreciation of the values needed to live together in ways that are respectful to others.

6.2.5 Increase visibility of residential programmes and promote their benefits

It is our assertion that the Do it 4 Real programme has been most successful in achieving this objective. A large proportion of the young people taking part in the programme would not have had an opportunity to do so had it not been for the support offered by the Big Lottery Fund. For this reason, the visibility of residential programmes has been raised amongst groups of the population traditionally missed by mainstream residential provision. The high level of take up and the accessibility of Do it 4 Real to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can be considered key achievements of the programme.

In addition, the positive experiences of young people whilst on the programme will ensure that word of mouth spreads the benefits of residential programmes to an audience far greater than possible with general marketing alone. Indeed, the higher level of demand in 2006 suggests that this happened to some extent.

In conclusion, Do it 4 Real has been successful in achieving market growth within the residential programme market. The offer of subsidised places has been important in allowing this growth. There are signals, albeit at a small

scale, that some parents are unwilling, or unable to pay the full market rate. Other parents may be in a similar position, but have not called YHA to express their frustration. Therefore, the withdrawal of subsidy may lead to a significant fall in demand moving forward.