

Joint working to meet the needs of young people at risk of exclusion from mainstream education

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This report is produced by VCS Engage, a programme funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to strengthen the engagement of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in delivering the Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda. VCS Engage is steered by a consortium of infrastructure and delivery organisations working in the children, young people and families voluntary and community sector, and supported by a large number of individual agencies that are committed to working as part of the programme.

The report was commissioned as part of the VCS Engage work concerned with strengthening collaborative approaches. By identifying and refining models of collaborative working, VCS Engage aims to facilitate collaboration and cooperation both across the VCS and with strategic partners and providers in the public and private sectors.

Members of the consortium are:

- National Children's Bureau (NCB)
- National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO)
- National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)
- National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)
- Parenting UK
- Family Welfare Association (FWA)
- NCH

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Context for development

Rainer and Rathbone recognised an opportunity within the schools marketplace to offer more comprehensive training and support for young people either at risk of or already excluded from mainstream education.

Together, the organisations saw a further opportunity to research a model of integrated service delivery. Both organisations acknowledged the synergy of their independent offers, which could come together to become an integrated delivery model that will provide all aspects of training and support to young people.

They proposed to draw up a delivery model – for schools or clusters of schools and in the long term, Children’s Trusts – for young people at risk of exclusion or those already excluded. Rainer and Rathbone have a long and successful history of providing these services to young people outside of mainstream provision. The Rainer–Rathbone proposal was to act as a key worker (lead professional) agency to manage individual cases and deliver these services.

The objective of the model is to support young people aged 11–16 who are either experiencing a combination of behaviour and attendance problems; have been excluded from school; or are at risk of offending or becoming socially excluded. It would further offer support packages to meet the needs of the parents and carers of those young people who access the provision.

To do this Rainer and Rathbone needed assistance with:

- refining and testing the model and ensuring it met current agendas
- piloting the model with schools and young people
- producing marketing materials in a format that various potential commissioners can access and understand
- testing out ways of selling the model to new markets
- exploring partnerships with private sector providers with a view to scaling up services
- modifying the Communities that Care (CtC) research questionnaire to make it better equipped to report on ECM outcomes.

It was proposed that the joint work done to date would be of use to others in the following ways:

- providing an analysis and practical lessons in creating and offering a service that crosses boundaries
- detailing what it is like to try and sell a product in a new and evolving marketplace
- furthering understanding of commissioners’ thinking.

Outputs

Output 1: Communities that Care – survey tool

Objective

- To develop and pilot an ECM youth survey questionnaire

Research in Britain, other Western European countries and the USA has shown that there are influential risk factors (see appendix 1) in children's lives that increase their chances of developing health and behaviour problems – and reduce the likelihood of them experiencing positive outcomes – as they grow older. Equally important, there are protective factors (see appendix 1) that help to promote resilience in children and young people and improve their outcomes.

Rainer CtC (formerly Communities that Care, a charity established in 1997 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) works with local people, agencies and organisations to help them use their knowledge of risk and protection to promote healthy personal and social development and to improve outcomes for young people, whilst at the same time reducing levels of 'problem behaviours' such as:

- violence, crime and anti-social behaviour
- alcohol, drugs and substance misuse
- school-age pregnancy, parenting and sexually transmitted diseases
- educational underachievement.

The CtC questionnaire

When working in a local area,¹ CtC undertakes a 'risk and protection audit'. This is primarily a survey, using an updated version of the CtC youth survey questionnaire first developed for CtC in 1998 by the School of Applied Social Studies at Oxford University.² The aim is to survey all local young people (in and out of school) aged between 11 and 16; and it achieves response rates of 80 per cent and more.

The audit is designed to establish, within the designated area:

- the extent to which young people are achieving (or on track to achieve) positive outcomes
- levels and patterns of the four 'problem behaviours' listed above
- the relative importance (locally) of the known risk and protective factors in 'driving' problem behaviour levels and holding back outcomes.

¹ Rainer CtC works in areas ranging in size from small, individual neighbourhoods to whole local authority areas.

² Since 1998, Rainer CtC has surveyed more than 350,000 young people in England, Scotland and Wales. This includes a national survey undertaken with a representative sample of 15,000 respondents aged 11 to 16. That survey produced benchmarks for local audits and also provided the basis for the Youth Justice Board publication 'Risk Factors Associated with Youth Crime'.

In short, the audit offers an approach to the measurement of outcomes that:

- is evidence-based – it uses a tried-and-tested questionnaire based on sound research to survey a large sample
- actively engages local young people
- measures the extent to which desirable outcomes are being achieved
- identifies the major obstacles to and opportunities for improved outcomes.

Every Child Matters and the Rainer CtC response

Every Child Matters (ECM) specifies five outcomes for all children and young people. They should:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

Moreover, both ECM and Youth Matters emphasise the importance of an evidence-based approach to helping children and young people achieve these outcomes. Both stress the need to actively engage children and young people in developing that approach. Therefore, having spoken to a number of agency partners in different parts of the country, Rainer CtC decided to investigate the possibility of developing an ECM version of its youth survey questionnaire. It has successfully developed, tested and 'pre-piloted' an ECM questionnaire covering:

- family
- home neighbourhood
- school
- alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs
- crime and anti-social behaviour
- friends and peers
- views and opinions
- health and leisure.

The first of the pre-pilot exercises was tested with around 100 Year 9 students in a secondary school in Lowestoft, Suffolk. Analysing their responses and the completion rates for each question, the CtC researchers identified issues that they wished to follow up with some of their respondents in a series of focus groups. Generally, the draft questionnaire worked well, but the focus group discussions resulted in a number of very helpful modifications.

The second 'pre-pilot' exercise involved surveying more than 900 young people at a Medway secondary school. Again, an analysis of response and completion rates showed that the questionnaire worked well at a practical level. This was confirmed in follow-up focus groups. More importantly, in this instance, the results confirmed the hypothesis that the known risk and protective factors in the CtC 'model' are associated with the five ECM outcomes, so it is reasonable to say that work to reduce risk and promote protection will produce improved ECM outcomes.

The ECM survey report therefore offers local agencies:

- reliable measurement (at three levels: local authority, sub-area and ward) of the extent to which each of the five ECM outcomes is being achieved
- analysis by age, ethnicity, family structure, gender and home neighbourhood, so that agencies can identify any groups who are 'missing out' on accessing services
- information on the relationship between each of the five outcomes and the local prevalence of the known risk and protective factors

The survey also offered discrete, detailed sub-sets on:

- alcohol, tobacco and drugs
- crime, anti-social behaviour and violence
- education
- health
- recreation and leisure
- views of young people.

The result is a way of measuring the achievement of ECM outcomes that is:

- evidence-based
- informed by meaningful engagement with significant numbers of young people
- designed not only to measure current outcomes levels, but also to identify the steps needed to secure future improvements.

Conclusion

The new ECM survey provides local authorities with a ready-made audit and planning tool that enables them to survey large numbers of local children and young people in order to:

- measure the extent to which local children and young people are achieving each of the five ECM outcomes
- identify any groups or communities within the general population whose children are 'missing out'
- identify the issues that need to be addressed in order to secure improved outcomes.

In short, the survey is not only an ECM monitoring and measurement tool, but can also be used for future planning and for engaging significant numbers of children and young people in that planning.

With suitable funding, ECM surveys could be organised and managed by Rainer CtC's research team, who will work alongside local authorities and their partners to provide a comprehensive ECM service, including planning, logistics, data-analysis and report preparation.

With suitable funding, in the slightly longer term, Rainer CtC could conduct a national ECM survey. Using the same questionnaire on a representative sample of young people, a 'national ECM picture' could be established to provide a benchmark that would add further value to local ECM surveys.

Output 2: Developing and refining the model

Objectives

- To develop a model of education and support that integrates the services of both organisations
- To test out the model of education and support with relevant parties
- To see the views of potential users on the proposed model

In order to develop and refine the model, a number of phases were undertaken.

Phase 1: Internal

Meetings took place with senior managers within both Rainer and Rathbone to discuss the range of provision that already exists and that could be integrated within the model. Following this, a second meeting was held with lead practitioners from both organisations who were responsible for aspects of delivery. A draft model was then developed and circulated for comment; and refinements were made accordingly. The model was then circulated internally within both organisations for further comment. This resulted in a finalised draft model, which is detailed on page 11.

Phase 2: External

The purpose of consulting with potential commissioners and relevant parties was to consider, in turn:

- the local context
- their initial thoughts on the model
- the potential local opportunities for developing aspects of the model
- the potential local commissioning arrangements relating to aspects of the model
- a gap analysis
- any barriers to the ethos of an integrated delivery approach.

The following potential commissioners and interested parties were consulted:

- chief executive, Connexions
- principal, foundation comprehensive school
- vice-principal, foundation comprehensive school
- strategic lead, private sector education provider
- four headteachers, private sector education provider
- seven heads of local authority, alternative curriculum provision
- assistant director, Children's Services
- two heads of service, Children's Services
- headteacher, comprehensive school
- educational consultant.

Each commissioner and interested party was given a formal presentation and marketing materials, followed by a question-and-answer session and an informal open discussion. A further draft of the model incorporated these comments.

Phase 3: Seeking the views of young people

This research was carried out using a range of research methodologies, depending on the group of young people that were consulted. These included discussions, art-based research and questionnaires. The majority of the young people in the target group found it quite difficult to complete the questionnaires, so these were simplified. The

art-based research consisted of two A3 sheets, one asking about the location of the proposed project ('What it should be like' – see below), while the other focused on the people who would be teaching at the proposed project ('What a good worker would be like' – see page 9). In relation to the latter, the young people were asked what their ideal youth worker/teacher would be like and to describe these different qualities. Overall, the young people thought that the model was a good idea and they could see how it could benefit them.

Total no. of questionnaires	52	
Gender ratio	Female:Male – 40:60	
Age group	From 11–16 yrs	(Five peer educators who are over 16 were also asked to complete these questionnaires as they are 'service users')
Locations	Essex: Basildon, Laindon, Wickford, Pitsea, Billericay and Southend	

'What it should be like'

INSIDE: 'We should be able to'	OUTSIDE: 'We should be able to'
Relax	Play
Meet friends	Do sports and leisure activities (keeping fit, helping community, self-defence, swimming, visiting play grounds)
Get advice	Hang around without getting told off
Play games	Not be in danger of traffic
Make noise	Not upset neighbours
Talk openly	Smoke
Have space to be ourselves	Go for walks
Have places to chill out	
Feel safe	
Have access to fun stuff (i.e. computers, games, sports stuff, TV)	
The space should be/have:	The space should have:
Comfortable but professional	A field for football
Bright and colourful – young people should be involved in decorating and decisions	Graffiti walls
A large area so people are not stuck in small areas together	BBQ facilities
Classroom settings for learning (maths, English, science, languages)	Easy access to shops
Activity/game rooms	First aid

The space should be/have:	The space should be/have:
'Chill out' areas	A patch of garden to do gardening (plant trees) and for picnics, greenhouse, farmyard for animals
Kitchen and vending machine (cook their own food)	Seating facilities
Toilets	Well lit
Counselling/'one-to-one' rooms, 'think' room/'quiet' room, diary room	
Library	
Crèche facilities	
Place to play music, music studio	
Scanners at all entrances for protection from knives, guns, drugs	

'What a Good Worker Would Be Like'

Should know:	Should be:	Should be/be able to:
Current issues affecting young people	Kind	Cheer you up
Everything	Thoughtful	Listen
How young people feel	Aware	Relate to young people
About drugs, sexual health, self-esteem and other issues affecting young people	Flexible	Help others
How to look after people	Approachable	Join in with activities
Run lessons/workshops	Happy	Discipline others when necessary
How to run various fun activities	Positive	Cook
How to multi-task	Clever	Talk about themselves
How to maintain interest and control	Knowledgeable	Have a laugh
Teach	Genuine, not patronising	Treat young people with respect
How to always be there for young people	On young people's level	Handle difficult situations
Assist young people	Responsible	Act fairly
	Organised	Delegate
	Maybe past service users	Involve young people in activities
	Firm but sensitive	Give advice, support
	Good sense of humour	Empathise

Should know:	Should be:	Should be/be able to:
	Authoritative	Successful
	Tactful	Like children
	Down-to-earth	
	Dedicated, motivated	
	Non-judgmental, open-minded	
	Caring and pleasant	
	Not overbearing	
	Cool	
	Understanding	
	Patient	
	Smart, qualified	

Quotes from young people on Output 2: Developing and refining the model

'Seems like it's more focused to my needs'

'It would help me concentrate more'

'I like structure'

'More approachable'

'There will be someone with you most of the time'

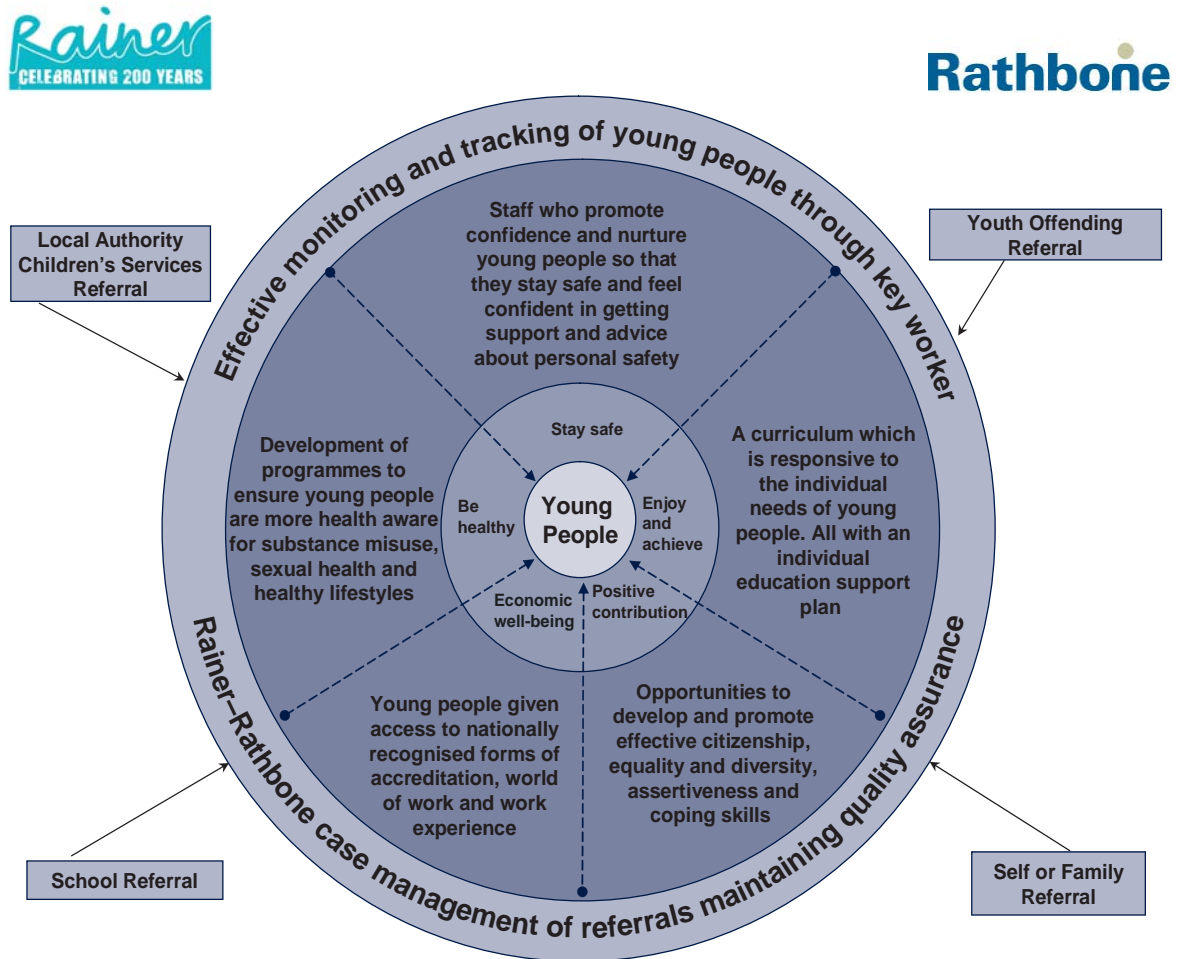
'Make me more confident'

'There is less people in the class'

'Look forward to the future'

The model

The conceptual model offers a fully inclusive, personalised range of services to meet all the varied needs of individuals, schools and local authorities. The concept can be adapted to fit the requirements of the commissioner. The model would then be based on these requirements. The figure below illustrates the Rainer–Rathbone model:



Delivery of the five ECM outcomes are central to the Rainer–Rathbone model

ECM outcome	Role of the model is to:
Be healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide access to physical diversionary activities and promote healthy lifestyles • provide or ensure access to education and support • support parents or carers to ensure that children and young people are healthy • provide or ensure access to individual and group support aimed at improving and maintaining mental health • promote sexual health through education, including awareness of teenage pregnancy, and ensure access to appropriate services where needed.

ECM outcome	Role of the model is to:
Stay safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● comply with health and safety legislation and policy ● ensure staff are Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked and all are Child Protection (CP) trained ● ensure access to Child Protection Services ● promote anti-discriminatory behaviour and prevent bullying ● reduce young people's experience of, and involvement in, crime and anti-social behaviour ● initiate information-sharing processes to prevent children and young people slipping through the net ● ensure young people are aware of how to keep themselves safe ● raise awareness of sexual exploitation and actively prevent it.
Enjoy and achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● help to ensure all participants have access to full-time education ● help young people to make full and constructive use of their leisure time ● provide positive and accessible recreational activities for young people.
Make a positive contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● target young people at risk or engaging in anti-social behaviour (ASB) and/or criminal activity ● prevent or reduce engagement in ASB and/or criminal activity of that targeted group ● focus the interventions on reducing risk factors associated with offending behaviour and increasing protective factors ● reduce the experience of bullying and ASB of young people involved with the Rainer–Rathbone Model ● provide opportunities for young people to contribute to the local community through active citizenship ● promote the engagement of young people with law-abiding and positive behaviour ● promote and support personal development and self-confidence through access to constructive and positive activities ● empower young people through meaningful participation in service user involvement, youth forums, and on recruitment panels.
Achieve economic well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● promote the engagement of young people in education ● assist in preparing young people for further education, training and employment ● support the families of young people to improve their socioeconomic status ● provide free activities to enable access to those who would otherwise not participate.

Models of support

As an example, the following are details of the range of support packages on offer through the integrated model.

Basic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● literacy and numeracy ● one-to-one and small group ● accredited learning.
Key working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● intensive and flexible one-to-one support ● wider experiences ● action planning ● facilitator role that empowers ● challenging young people's behaviour and facilitates boundary setting ● support and referral to specialist services.
Group work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● assertiveness skills ● identity ● confidence building ● sexual health ● alcohol and drug use ● equality and diversity ● managing feelings ● coping methods ● self-efficacy and resilience.
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● adult community volunteers ● one-to-one relationship ● BTEC training and accreditation ● action focused ● moving on strategies for young people ● support and referral to specialist services.
Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● homes/schools/neutral areas according to desires and needs ● drop-in ● group work ● teenage parents programmes (including dads programmes) ● family education ● can be 6-, 8-, 12-week programmes.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● partnership with schools and local authority ● enriching, diversionary, structured, educative ● single and group activities ● sport, cultural, artistic, entertaining; and reward recognition.
Work tasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● work experience ● pre-work taster sessions ● awareness raising – health and safety ● interview practice ● support to young person and employer.

Alternative curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● full time (25 hours) and part time (one or more days)● curriculum – GCSE equivalents, Key Stage 2, 3, and 4 provision● preparation for work and information, advice and guidance● Work-Based Learning (WBL)● Work-Related Learning (WRL)● vocational tasters● work experience● PSHE● citizenship● cognitive learning skills● problem solving/team building.
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A key element of the model is involving young people in their own assessment and planning for the future, thereby empowering them to make a positive contribution.

Assessment is crucial to developing a needs-led level of support within the model. A common assessment framework, which is in line with CAF requirements, has been adapted.

Key elements of initial assessment within the model are the:

- Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- use of the CtC survey tool to inform practice
- individual/needs-led initial assessment.

Individual learning plans (ILP) and progress review

The ILP would detail the results from the above assessment and specify the:

- level/aspects of social support
- level/aspects of educational support
- programme of learning
- relevant information as identified by other agencies that may inform the above
- possible progression routes
- targets for educational attainment
- specifications to measure distance travelled, based around soft skills and behaviour.

This would be administered to:

- each young person
- parents/carers

It is proposed that reviews would be undertaken monthly with the young person and, where possible, the parent/carer would be invited to attend. A full review would be completed quarterly with the young person, associated agencies and parents/carers. This would be documented and form part of the ILP.

Monitoring and evaluation

A performance management framework has been put in place that comprises a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) underpinned by a continuous performance improvement (CPI) quality-assurance model.

Depending on the aspects of the model chosen by the local area, data collection could include:

- qualitative feedback from schools
- qualitative feedback from service users
- qualitative feedback from parents/carers of service users
- rates regarding reoffending, exclusion, attendance, etc.
- plans covering personal development, individual learning, support and progress
- rates regarding substance use
- behaviour and attendance levels
- Youth Offending Services (YOS) data on offending
- Drug Alcohol Action Team reports
- Connexions reports
- Youth Service reports
- schools and local authority pupil achievement data.

A range of methods would be used to establish this data, for example:

- focus groups
- pre-/post-intervention questionnaires
- group work
- feedback forms
- quarterly review forms
- assessment detailing substance use, behaviour and attendance rates.

The following case studies show how the model has been used in the cases of two young people.

Case study 1: Chloe

Chloe had always hated school. She had plenty of avoidance strategies to hide her learning difficulties. She hated two of her teachers in particular and played truant regularly. Soon she was meeting up with slightly older girls who had already left school and were without jobs. To get money they would shoplift and sell on the goods through a man who seemed to have a powerful influence over her new friends.

Enjoying her new-found friendships, Chloe stopped going to school altogether. After getting into trouble with the police for stealing some designer clothes, she was asked by the man her friends knew if she wanted to earn more, easier money. She realised she was out of her depth, but the power of the group was too much for her. The man raped her and wanted her to become a prostitute.

Chloe became very unhappy and started spending more of her time on her own. She stayed away from home for several nights at a time. After a period of heavy drinking she was caught stealing again and was arrested. She assaulted the PC arresting her and was given a custodial sentence.

She was referred to the project and a key worker visited her in the secure training centre (STC). After her needs were assessed, the aim was to enable her to continue with her education and to get her back into a school when she was released. The key worker liaised with a school prepared to help. They started to develop a curriculum for her whilst she was with the education staff at the STC.

Meanwhile, the parenting worker was supporting her family, helping them to understand boundary setting and discussing the sort of help that Chloe would need on her return to the community. Two months later she was released and her key worker visited the school on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, things didn't go as well as planned. After an inter-agency meeting it was decided that school was not the best place for Chloe. Instead she attended the alternative curriculum centre run by Rainer–Rathbone where she started to make new friends and settled into a period of stability, studying health and social care. After Chloe turns 16, she wants to carry on to an apprenticeship. She has learnt more effectively in a high staff to student environment and her literacy and numeracy skills have improved dramatically.

Rainer–Rathbone have also arranged the counselling sessions she required to help her through the trauma of her earlier experiences. She meets regularly with her mentor and has built up high levels of trust with a range of adults.

Case study 2: Alan

Alan was a lively and very popular young man, but at the start of Year 8 he became very withdrawn and disaffected. His schoolteachers noted a rapid deterioration in his behaviour. His mother was called into school to discuss his behaviour and the possible consequences if he continued to disrupt the class.

Very quickly Alan's behaviour worsened and he became very aggressive and violent. This resulted in a series of short-term exclusions that were finally made permanent when he assaulted his form tutor.

Despite attempts to get Alan into another school, he refused to cooperate and started hanging around with a criminal peer group. He was eventually arrested and was given a final warning by the police. He was referred to the pupil placement panel of the local authority since he had by now not been to school for over six months.

The panel referred him to the Rainer–Rathbone project.

He was quickly assessed and provided with an agreed individual learning and support plan. A parenting worker visited his mother to discuss the support she might need and to gain some background history.

This is how it progressed:

- Alan needed a mentor to keep in regular contact with him, and to find suitable youth support provision to help him avoid hanging around with his criminal peer group.
- A gradual process was begun to get him back into education provision in the Rainer–Rathbone centre, with the aim of him attending every day for two weeks.
- He was provided with accredited learning through the Youth Achievement award so that he could begin to enjoy and achieve.
- As his mentor became more involved and their relationship strengthened, it was discovered that Alan had been experimenting with hard drugs and that

this was the reason for his withdrawn demeanour. As a result he was supported to attend a local drugs project.

- Alan's mother is financially stretched and is in debt. The parenting worker helped her to obtain advice from the local Citizen's Advice Bureau.
- She also received help and support to cope with Alan's demands and behaviour.
- As Alan's social and personal skills had deteriorated, it was decided to place him on a course to help him regain his confidence, set him challenges and enable him to build lasting relationships with others.

A good deal of preparation and follow-up work was completed. Alan's key worker and case manager reviewed his progress after each month and reported back to the local authority on a regular basis. It was envisaged that, with tapering support, Alan could return to education – attending a new school by the start of the summer term.

His key worker provides support for an hour each day in the school and continues to monitor his performance. The parenting worker still meets regularly with his mother to give her advice about behaviour, rewards and sanctions.

During the summer holidays, Alan was prioritised for activity-based sessions at the youth engagement project run by Rainer–Rathbone.

Costing the model

A flexible costing approach has been developed. Financial modelling was found to be a particularly challenging exercise. A model was developed that would offer flexible solutions to commissioners, depending on identified local or individual need, Therefore individual costing is difficult to determine. This has resulted in the development of indicative costs based on hours of delivery that are determined more fully at point of purchase.

Items identified as important to the programme

Crossing boundaries

'An analysis and practical lessons in creating and offering a service that crosses boundaries'

The research uncovered a broad range of practice. At one end of the spectrum, an area approach was experienced (see the Case study 3) that included all key stakeholders involved with young people. This appeared to have clear lines of accountability, a joined-up approach – including commissioning arrangements – and tackled the issues at the very heart of the community. There was a positive and open appearance to the conceptual model because the strategic lead providers were easily able to identify the gaps in provision. At the other end of the spectrum, there were small providers working with a narrow and isolated focus, with a lack of understanding of the wider needs and little knowledge of gaps in provision within their marketplace.

Case study 3: strategic leads private sector education provider

Described by the Audit Commission as a 'diverse urban area' characterised by some neighbourhoods of intense deprivation, in 2001 this borough developed a partnership approach to the delivery of educational services. In 2006, there were 86 primary, 19 secondary, seven special and eight nursery schools. The 'not in education and training' (NEET) cohort in the area for the second quarter in 2006/7 was 10.4 per cent, around the national average. However, there are pockets of areas where the figures are disproportionate, such as in the west of the borough where 50 per cent of young people are NEET.

The private sector education provider is an international service company that combines commercial acumen with a deep public service ethos. Education is one of its areas of specialism and it provides operational, management and consulting expertise. The main focus of this partnership between local authority and private sector provider is school improvement and strategic management, with overall accountability to the borough council.

To inform this research, six key personnel from the private sector education provider met in an open forum to discuss the Rainer–Rathbone model and how it might support this type of approach to the delivery of educational services. Through discussion it quickly became apparent that there was a clear joined-up approach to the delivery of educational training and support across the borough. This is underpinned by an educational development plan and a strong mission that is defined as *'far reaching'*. It records aims as:

'to support and challenge schools and the community in raising standards in education and learning'

And to deliver the mission, the vision is to have:

'an education partnership which puts learners and their potential at its heart, and which encourages the attitudes and respect needed to optimise individual talents and develop positive relationships between fellow citizens'

As a result of this, within the borough there appears to be an embedded approach that all providers of education and services (including the schools and the community) embrace. The private sector education provider itself delivers some provision; and commissions other organisations with specific expertise (for example, the VCS) to provide an integrated approach to meet the needs of children and young people.

The potential of a robust, well-led strategic partnership is demonstrated by its positive impact in providing a comprehensive service, for example, it has put in a significant bid for capital to develop a 'business learning campus' (a vocational skills centre in the west of the borough) in response to the learning and skills priority for local investment. This will address some of the NEET issues as well as support the ongoing educational agenda within the area. Another benefit of this holistic approach is recognising the gaps in provision and deciding how best to meet them. The discussion of the concepts of the proposed model acted almost as a catalyst for further exploration of needs, and debate took place about how these could best be met and what would work successfully within the current partnership arrangements. As with all the research, funding and sustainability remain key issues, but one of the benefits of a synergy with large international providers is the link between their existing funding streams and the current activity that can support some delivery of provision, where appropriate.

Lessons learnt in crossing boundaries

In summary, in selling a model that crosses boundaries, the research indicates that it requires:

- a joined-up strategic area approach
- a strong lead
- an effective analysis of local need
- effective communication across all key stakeholders
- efficient systems and processes
- a strong mission set around targets, i.e. in reduction of NEET
- a stakeholder synergy to offer best possible service and an open and transparent approach to engaging other relevant stakeholders
- a sharing of best practice and open approach to learning
- both funding and sustainability.

Selling in a new market

Information on what it is like to try and sell a product in a new and evolving marketplace

Opportunities to deliver targeted youth support (or elements of it) are tied into how the commissioning frameworks for local authorities will develop and are delivered under Children's Trust arrangements from 2008. Present opportunities to provide Youth Matters outcomes lie within current arrangements and fall within multiple funding streams across different agencies. Towards 2008 transition arrangements will mean local authorities are likely to extend present contracts or bring services in-house, which limit immediate opportunities. In terms of schools, there are a range of funding streams focusing on the issues identified, such as behaviour and attendance. The funding arrangements are varied: in some areas this includes the use of local VCS to provide a range of services and provision.

Case study 4 highlights what it is like to try and sell a product in a new market.

Case study 4: foundation comprehensive school

This large school is able to educate 2,800 students aged 11–18 at the heart of a campus which also houses an adult and continuing education centre, a leisure complex, gallery, theatre, church and dental practice. The school has a very large sixth form of around 500 students and was recognised in its 2006 Ofsted report as being effective, *'enabling students to make good progress in a caring and supportive environment'*.

The area has been identified as one of the four major growth areas in the South East of England. The borough has a growing population of youth and is currently consulting on the next group of nursery schools. The NEET population has been reduced from 6.9 per cent (November 2006) to 6.3 per cent, which is below the national average, with an aim for a further reduction of 2 per cent by 2010. The borough has 75 primary/infant, 16 junior, 12 secondary, six special and two nursery schools (21 schools have nursery provision) plus five alternative education and inclusion schools.

A meeting was held with the principal and deputy principals at which the concept of the Rainer–Rathbone model was presented and discussed. The school uses its core funding in an innovative way to support the needs of its students to the best of its capabilities, and therefore a key challenge for adopting any aspects of the model would be the financial resourcing of provision. Within this borough it was apparent that the local authority commissioned and managed the funding for education and support.

The principal chairs a headteachers forum, which appears to develop coherence, but little evidence was presented of a fully integrated strategic partnership involving all key stakeholders. The concepts of the model, whilst appreciated and understood, were not seen as a viable option at this stage due

to the nature of funding. Whilst there was an understanding of possible gaps within the borough, such as very little provision at Key Stage 3 for those who are excluded, there was little that could be done to address this in the commissioning process at this time. It was suggested that, after July, opportunities for the development of additional provision may become available.

Lessons learnt in selling in a new marketplace

The research discovered significant challenges in some areas, particularly where immature strategic thinking or lack of joined-up thinking was apparent.

As a large organisation, the time and resources are more readily available to devote to relationship building and management in order to assist us in selling what we deliver to potentially immature marketplaces. The work involved is time consuming and significant levels of expertise are required to work through the commissioning process and varied local priorities and needs.

A secondary point is that there is a tendency to continue delivering in the same traditional way. We have the ability to challenge this way of thinking so that, ultimately, the best possible service is delivered to young people. For example, in one local area there was complacency around changing to different and innovative ways of service delivery.

Commissioners' thinking

Furthering understanding of commissioners thinking

When the Rainer–Rathbone model was initially developed, consideration was given to what potential commissioners – whether local authorities (LAs), individual or clusters of schools, sub-contracting organisations or central government departments – would be looking for. The thinking was that commissioners would be looking for contractors who would be able to demonstrate that they could contribute towards delivering public service agreements (PSAs).

Local public service agreements (LPSAs) are additional priorities identified through discussion and agreement between local authorities and government (represented locally by the relevant government office) and are encapsulated in local area agreements (LAAs). LPSAs and LAAs may not contain related agreements, but when they do, these will need to be taken into account when approaching commissioners.

Case study 5 highlights some of the potential commissioners' thinking.

Case study 5: Connexions Service

Based in an area with 15 secondary and two specialist schools, two pupil referral units and three clusters of primary schools. There was, however, an element of coherence as all of these key providers of education met on a regular basis with Connexions and representatives from the local authority. Part of this joined-up thinking is attributed to Excellence in City funding that has enabled the development of provision for young people. The area has high unemployment, with NEET figures at 6.7 per cent (November 2005). The Connexions service is part of an independent sector company that provides a range of services, including a youth offending and drugs and alcohol team, and has an ethos of partnership working. This is a unique arrangement funded by the local authority.

The meeting was held with the chief executive of Connexions, who has been integral to driving the strategic planning and partnerships forward. The positive impact of the connectivity is demonstrated in tangible outcomes, including improvements in pupil attendance, investment in non-teaching staff, a senior post appointment to manage the inclusion agenda, creation of learning support units and offers of alternative provision out of school.

The feedback on the Rainer–Rathbone model was constructive, and recognised the issues surrounding headteachers funding another agency for work they already provide. If additional aspects of the model are to be considered too, then lack of funding would remain a major barrier. Due to the existing connectivity and provider networks, any gaps identified within any commissioning would be kept local, if appropriate. It would be difficult, unless there was open tendering, for Rainer–Rathbone to break into this area, even though there is a recognised strength in the offer.

It was recognised that within this area there were a number of services, including youth offending and substance misuse, which fell under a separate commissioning structure and so may inhibit a truly holistic approach to delivery.

Alternative curriculum provision

The area is typical of a deprived urban population. The authority maintains 45 schools, 10 of which are denominational. There are 18 primary, four junior, five infant and five nursery schools. Of the 11 secondary schools, four are selective (grammar schools) and seven are non-selective. There are two schools for pupils with special educational needs and two pupil referral units. There are significant pockets of disadvantage and many vulnerable children, with high numbers of asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, transient families; low-income households, looked-after children (LAC), and children with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The area has an above average percentage of young people who are NEET; and some under-achievement at post-16. There is a skills shortage in areas such as construction and low numbers on apprenticeship programmes. There are issues with continuity of learning support post-16 for LAC; and the numbers of young people not achieving the equivalent of five good GCSE passes by aged 19. There are also issues with the quality of the housing stock and availability of affordable, adequate housing.

The Alternative Education Service (AES) has special school status and is responsible for educating pupils who are not in mainstream school because of exclusion, short- and long-term medical conditions, and mental health issues leading to school refusal. The AES provides a continuum of provision of part-time and full-time education and individual support for secondary age pupils deemed to be educationally at risk. It includes secondary places for:

- learners with SEBD statements of special education needs (SEN)
- short-term places for Key Stage 3 learners focusing on self-management
- full-time places at Key Stage 4 as well as short-term, part-time and one-to-one places
- Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 places for the most vulnerable learners in need of emotional and social support
- full-time places for Year 11 pupils offering work-based learning
- provision in the schoolroom and on hospital wards.

Referrals to the school are made from Local Education Authority (LEA) admissions, the SEN team and from headteachers of mainstream or other special schools within the area. The area is increasingly becoming a model for other LEAs and is recommended by the DCSF as a successful blueprint. It has hosted a number of visits from colleagues in other authorities, not least because of exceptionally low exclusion rates, extensive alternative provision and the system-wide approach to behaviour management adopted by its schools.

During discussions with the seven heads of the AES, it was evident that partnership working was robust and that there were good relationships with local VCS (a number of local providers were mentioned). However, it is worth noting that these local providers are not funded to deliver services as part of the AES, but complete this work as part of existing voluntary fundraising activity. This aspect was discussed further and consideration was given to the fact that services were currently received for free. This would need to be looked at closely if these services requested payment for what they were currently providing. A

number of local areas of concern were raised, such as drug and alcohol use, poor attendance and meeting the educational needs of LAC. Interest was shown in devising and using aspects of the Rainer–Rathbone programme to meet this identified need, but on a small scale rather than as a whole-service approach (e.g. buying a place for one young person who was struggling with attendance). The non-formal working approach was seen as potentially attractive, particularly if Rainer–Rathbone were able to provide services out of normal hours. Interesting discussion was had on the subject of funding this type of activity. It was noted that when talking about this group of young people, their needs are complex and therefore require extremely intensive intervention that would be costly. However, it was noted that it was a case of looking at how resources can best be used at local level to ensure VCS are commissioned properly and in line with the Compact.³

Local authority children's services

A significant proportion of the population in the area is under the age of 19 (27.4 per cent). Outcomes for children and young people are adequate overall, but better in the areas of health, education and training than elsewhere. Most physical health indicators are in line with the average for similar areas and young people achieve comparatively well by the time they reach statutory school-leaving age. The proportion of young people aged 16–19 who are in education, employment or training is well above the national average. The area has 88 primary schools, 17 of which are church schools. The performance reflects the wide social mix in the local population. The area has 19 secondary schools: four are comprehensive, nine others are non-selective schools and six are grammar schools. GCSE results are close to the average for the whole country.

However, there are areas with high levels of social deprivation. School attainment levels are broadly in line with the national average but, across the area, there is great variation in the performance of schools, with over a quarter underachieving when compared with like schools. More children have been excluded from school, either permanently or for a fixed term, than the national average. Currently, more than four per cent of young people are not in education, employment or training after Year 11.

During discussions with the assistant director and heads of service, interest was expressed in the proposed model, particularly in terms of robust delivery to groups of difficult-to-engage young people so that school staff could be freed up to get on with other issues in the school. The area was open to a solution that really gets to the core of dealing with these young people both inside and outside school, but which doesn't demand a lot of headteachers and teachers in particular. On a wider local level, the area had identified the following issues that related to the proposed model: improve the vocational offer, reduce NEET, improve LAC educational outcomes. In terms of commissioning delivery such as that proposed within the model, the area was committed to cost savings and was interested to hear how the work could be focused on the preventive aspect, i.e. working with young people who were experiencing behaviour and attendance problems within schools to prevent exclusion and therefore contribute to their target within the Children and Young People's Partnership.

³ The Compact is a code of practice for the voluntary sector. Working together through the Compact – government, local public bodies and the voluntary and community sector in England can improve their relationships for mutual advantage and community gain.

Whilst there was a wealth of activity already happening in this area, they were keen to hear how we could contribute towards cost savings. The area was forward-thinking in terms of how aspects of the model such as CtC could contribute to meeting ECM outcomes as part of their longer term commissioning strategies. At present the VCS is well connected in this area. This has resulted in Rainer–Rathbone being invited back to present to a wider range of commissioners.

Lessons learnt in understanding commissioners' thinking

In summary, key messages in understanding commissioners' thinking are to:

- engage local providers where appropriate
- provide services that meet identified unmet need
- present cost savings in all discussion, i.e. by investing X you are saving X in the long term
- make support packages seen to be robust
- within schools in particular, be clear on what is required of teachers
- offer learning experiences for other staff
- present a coordinated and consistent approach at all times
- focus on the benefits of your provision, not just for the young person but for others too, such as teachers and other staff.

Discussion around opportunities and barriers to future development

Opportunities

Where Rainer–Rathbone already delivers existing services in pilot areas, there is an opportunity to engage with the relevant local steering group, possibly at operational level. This will assist in helping existing services to develop future opportunities locally as well as involving Rainer–Rathbone in potential pilot delivery and management. The multi-agency vision for commissioning will allow the simultaneous approach to all key players through direct commissioning groups and forums, offering better reach and the potential for larger delivery contracts in the long term.

In addition to broader services for extended schools, the model meets some of the core offer areas for extended schools, for example it provides study support, covers learning activities that take place out of school hours, helps to improve young people's motivation, builds their self-esteem and helps them to become more effective learners. Another example would be a personalised programme for a targeted group of under-performing children in the school, for example looked-after children or Key Stage 3 pupils. This could be provided to pupils free of charge (as opposed to some other services that schools may charge for). Other support services offered through the Rainer–Rathbone model could include support for parents and families, specialist services such as intensive behaviour support, working with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and sexual health services.

In summary, the main opportunities are:

- ✓ support for VCS delivery and the need to engage the VCS in delivering public services
- ✓ a conceptual model that adapts to identified need and provides a tool for gap analysis
- ✓ use of the CtC research tool and the measurement of ECM outcomes.

Barriers

There are a number of barriers to the VCS engaging in these changing arrangements. The key barriers identified through the course of this work include the difficulty for small VCS to engage at a wider level. There is a significant time resource required in reading about and understanding the recent changes. Tendering processes are time consuming and require significant work; and the commissioning process is often not driven nationally by any particular model. This in itself challenges smaller VCS organisations. There needs to be greater transparency in funding arrangements and greater opportunity for smaller VCS to work with larger, more established charities.

In summary, the main barriers are:

- ✓ it is difficult for small VCS to engage at a wider level
- ✓ tendering processes are very time consuming and require significant work
- ✓ the commissioning process is not being driven nationally by any particular model
- ✓ it requires a change of mindset
- ✓ self-preservation concerns of VCS organisations
- ✓ the perception of large voluntaries
- ✓ the complications of funding
- ✓ the non-transparency in funding arrangements.

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Appendix 1: Risk and protective factors

The **risk factors** targeted by the Rainer CtC programme arise in four domains.

Family

- poor parental supervision and discipline
- family conflict
- family history of problem behaviour
- parental involvement/attitudes condoning problem behaviour
- low income and poor housing

School

- low achievement, first identified in primary school
- aggressive behaviour, including bullying
- lack of commitment, including truancy
- school disorganisation

Community

- disadvantaged neighbourhood
- community disorganisation and neglect
- availability of drugs
- high turnover and lack of neighbourhood attachment

Individuals, friends and peers

- alienation and lack of social commitment
- attitudes that condone problem behaviour
- early involvement in problem behaviour
- friends involved in problem behaviour

The **protective factors and processes** that help to buffer children against risk, promote healthy, pro-social development and improve outcomes include:

- strong bonds with family, friends and teachers
- healthy standards set by parents, teachers and community leaders
- opportunities for involvement in families, schools and communities
- good social and learning skills
- recognition and praise for positive behaviour.

Appendix 2: Executive summary

In summary, successful Communities that Care (CtC) pre-pilots show the survey is a workable and robust tool. It is hoped that the CtC survey tool can be utilised to enhance local working. The level of participation by schools in Medway suggests that this kind of exercise is feasible. There are already signs of interest from other local authorities, which suggests that there is a real need for an approach to measuring ECM outcomes that is both evidence-based and that engages and consults substantial numbers of children and young people. Essentially, the **survey** is an evidence-based and dynamic approach to measuring ECM outcomes (i.e. it doesn't just measure what's happening, it shows what needs to be done to improve matters). In short, it can be used not only to monitor and measure ECM, but also to plan for the future and to engage significant numbers of children and young people. It therefore has significant potential for assisting local authorities to measure ECM outcomes.

Developing and refining an integrated model involved consulting both young people and interested parties (e.g. headteachers, alternative curriculum providers, assistant directors of Children's Services, and private sector education providers). This process confirmed that the model was both interesting and potentially powerful, particularly in terms of its evidence-base (using the CtC research tool); personalised learning and support; potential for out-of-hours support; engagement with those who are most hard to reach; and its engagement with parents/carers. In terms of the marketplace, it has been shown that in many cases funding is not available to work within this model, particularly in the schools market, or that money is extremely limited and very localised arrangements are currently in place. Funding is potentially already tied up in current provision and the challenge lies in convincing commissioners that a different way of working can be more effective and present long-term cost savings. Commissioning arrangements for Children's Trust in the areas consulted were still in the early stages and it was difficult to identify the potential for delivering this model within these arrangements. In crossing boundaries, key issues were strength of leadership, effective communication and identification of need. Some key messages from commissioners were identified that could be utilised by other VCS organisations when putting together new products and services.