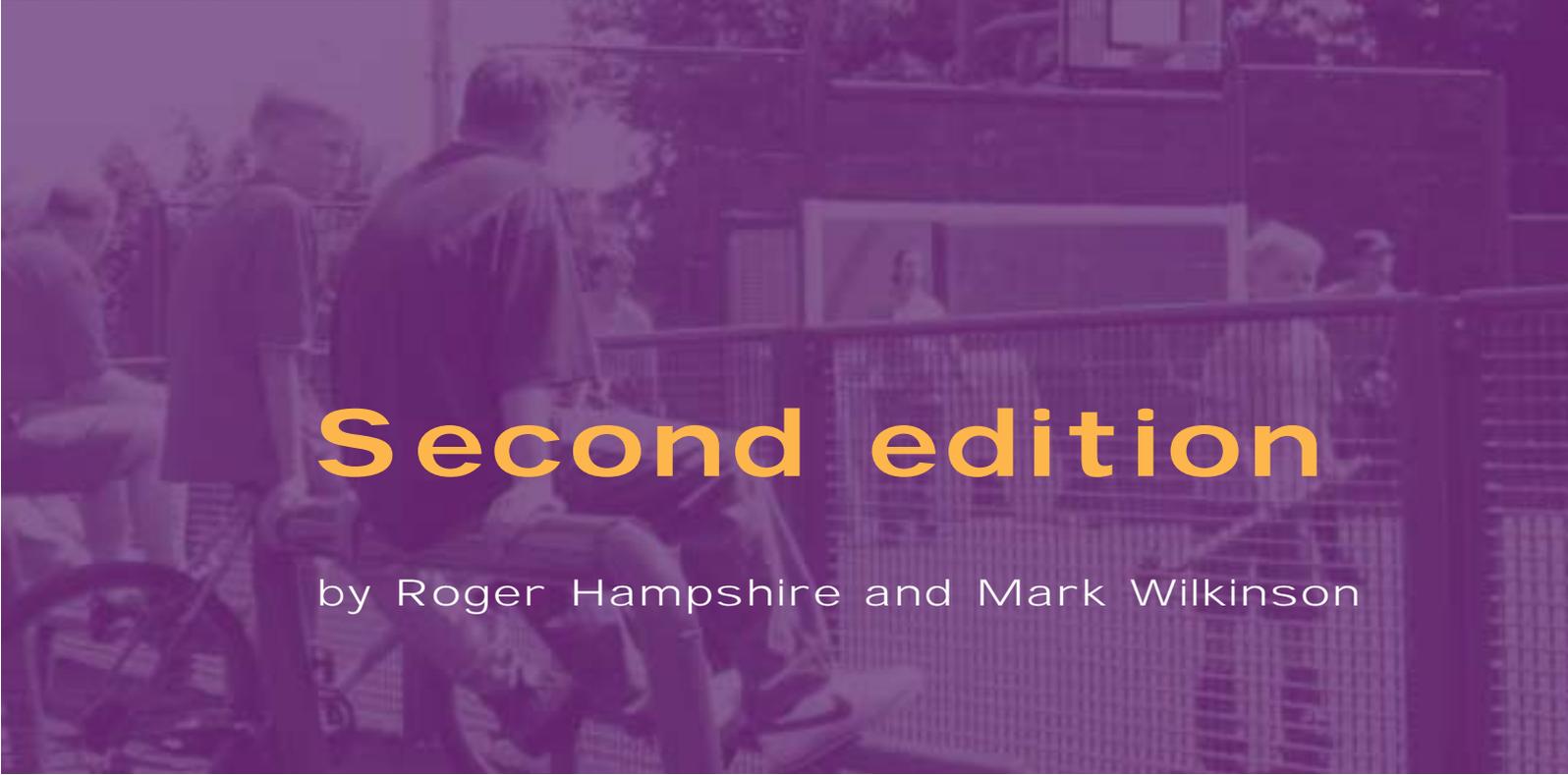


Youth Shelters and Sports Systems

A good practice guide



Second edition

by Roger Hampshire and Mark Wilkinson

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Foreword



Sir Charles Pollard
Chief Constable 1991-2002
Thames Valley Police



Mark Wilkinson
Crime Prevention Design Adviser
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Roger Hampshire
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Crime and disorder and community safety are of major concern to the public. In addition police officers spend many hours of their time dealing with incidents involving young people. When youths congregate on street corners or outside shops their actions raise fear of crime for some members of our communities.

This revised document has been updated to include further experience and advice about the problem of young people with nowhere to meet and socialise with their friends. The concept of youth shelters is excellent as it provides a solution which is acceptable to both young people and local residents.

As Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police I was pleased to introduce the original document on youth shelters in 1999. Although I have now retired from the police service I will retain my interest in this subject, as I will continue to work for the National Youth Justice Board.

In July 2001 the Government's Home Affairs Committee visited several youth shelters and sports facilities in the Thames Valley Police area. As a result of their report, Home Secretary David Blunkett has indicated that youth shelters will qualify for funding under new crime reduction schemes. He went on to say: "I believe such schemes can play a role in working with young people and dealing with disaffection".

Research has demonstrated the benefits of providing local facilities for this vulnerable age group. The involvement of youths throughout these projects has been shown to pay dividends and helps to prove that discussions and negotiation between different parties is one of the most positive ways of helping to solve problems. Best practice shows that where possible, youth shelters should be located with sports facilities or equipment.

I am very grateful to Roger Hampshire and Mark Wilkinson for continuing to research this subject. Following the success of the first publication they have spent a great deal of time promoting the concept of youth shelters. I am also pleased they continue to work with the University of the West of England in studying Community Safety and Crime Prevention.

Thames Valley Police aims to work with our communities to reduce crime, disorder and fear and the youth shelters programme is an excellent illustration of how this can work in practice.



Sir Charles Pollard
Chief Constable Thames Valley Police 1991-2002



When Mark Wilkinson undertook a study of youth shelters as a course project here at the University of the West of England, I encouraged him and his colleague Roger Hampshire to try and publish their findings for a wider audience. At the time I thought it would have a limited but worthwhile readership. Twenty five thousand copies later and into a second reprint, I realise that there are a lot of people out there who want to do something positive for young people! This is most encouraging as, for far too long, we have regarded gatherings of young people as a problem to be eliminated rather than as a need to be catered for.

Young people need to socialise as part of their normal growth and development; they need to learn how to relate to each other in the absence of adults – this is how they mature. It is true that they will sometimes make fools of themselves, take a few risks, get too boisterous and show off inappropriately in front of their peers. It is much better to let them do this in a designated space out of harm's way, than to try and stop them gathering outside shops or bus shelters and asking the police to move them on. At best this merely displaces the problem and it may well lead to other, more serious difficulties that could cost dearly in the longer term.

Youth shelters are not the whole solution – young people may also need more structured environments such as youth clubs, organised activities, drop-in cafés, advice and counselling services – but shelters and sports systems can make up an important part of the youth development jigsaw. Failure to invest in facilities that young people want is a false economy. This guide shows you how to invest wisely and I commend it to anyone who wants to improve the future for all our citizens.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Henry Shaftoe".

Henry Shaftoe
Award Leader, Community Safety and Crime Prevention Open Learning Programme -
University of the West of England, Bristol.

The problems with youths



There are many excellent facilities for the under 12s, but where will they play and meet in a few years time? Will these children be seen as tomorrow's future, or a group of vandals?

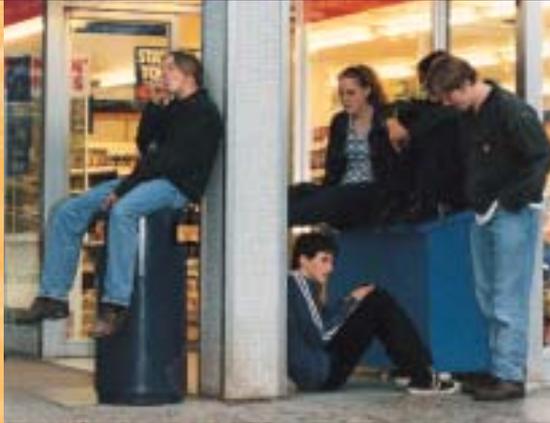
Some people in our communities view groups of youths as being frightening and blame them for damage, graffiti and nuisance behaviour. To these people, three or four youths sitting on a park bench, at a bus stop, or cycling amongst shoppers in a High Street, appear intimidating. This can affect everyone's quality of life and causes conflicts between generations.

Local councils provide play equipment for young children, yet often spend vast sums repairing damage to it following abuse by older children. Complaints about youths congregating near shops and community buildings, or playing ball games around homes and cars are frequent and difficult to resolve. 'No ball game' signs are put up, but can they be enforced? The problems become exaggerated, the public expects enforcement of the rule, but the cause of the problem has been ignored.

The police are called to deal with these problems but this does not often provide long-term answers. The short-term solution of moving youths on is not effective, as they merely move back as soon as police officers have left. This process frustrates everyone involved. These conflicts can escalate and result in more serious offences against people and their property.

Young people resent being seen as a problem and often consider themselves as the victims. They complain about a lack of facilities and often wish to be involved in finding solutions to the problems. In fact, it is imperative to work with young people in any project where 'youths' are seen to be an issue. "Hanging out" is part of the natural process of growing up, an intermediate

Nowhere to go



stage between the comfort and protection of a child's home environment and the complete independence of adult life. If we do not cater for this need by offering (in consultation with young people) suitable locations and structures, then young people will continue to use places not intended for this purpose. This may then result in confrontations and complaints.

Latest research by the Home Office shows the average age of offending starts at 13½ years for boys and 14 years for girls, whilst the peak age of offending is about 15 years. If young people don't have a place of their own to go to, it may increase the risk of minor damage that can take place when they meet in unsuitable places. This can lead to a spiral of anti-social behaviour and the start of a criminal record.

Youths often congregate in a play area in which they grew up. However, when they are older they feel little respect for the equipment and are more likely to damage it rather than play on it. It is not 'cool' to merely sit on a toy elephant (for example) unless you can bash it against the ground or twist its trunk off. So why don't we ask youths what facilities they would like and where they should be located? In cases where young people have been asked, their requirements are often surprisingly modest – just somewhere dry where they can meet their friends.

The problem caused by the gap in recreational facilities covering adolescent years is frequently increased by the lack of free alternatives that are open for casual use. Clubs and youth organisations, although popular, tend to open for just a few hours each week, which means youths have to find something else to do for the rest of the time.

Young people need to socialise and become integrated into their communities. If we do not help this process we may be storing up problems for the future.

The solution

SMP Arena Shelter



Base Leisure Trojan Youth Shelter



Adults tend to assume that young people need youth clubs or other structured (and expensive) activities. Some even find it difficult to accept that children and young people are allowed on the streets or in public areas without adult supervision. But ask young people what they want and they will tell you:

"Somewhere to go that is safe, where we won't get hassled"

"A place of our own away from adults"

"Somewhere to kick a ball about, try out skating or cycling", and most importantly "Just a place to meet friends"

It may be that they would just like a simple shelter with seating, in a safe place. It is important to choose the right location. The opportunity to supervise a younger brother or sister on adjacent toddlers play equipment, whilst staying in an area close to home, could have advantages.

Asking young people what they want and then involving them in providing it increases the chances that the equipment will be used properly and looked after.

What is a youth shelter?

A youth shelter is a structure designed to meet the social needs of young people - a sheltered place to sit and talk. Sports equipment could be included and a litter bin is often asked for to help keep the area tidy. The roof provides shelter from the weather, but most shelters are open on all sides, enabling all round visibility, 'natural policing' and safety for users. The most successful shelters are those that are linked to some type of sporting facility - these complement each other by becoming a place to go for both physical and social activity. Variations on ball games and various 'wheeled sports equipment' are always popular and it is vital to fully involve users of all ages in selecting their preferred equipment for this and future generations.

Often local authorities have provided a sports field for community use, but any equipment such as goal posts are removed, so young people are expected to run around the field for a few hours and then go straight home without any opportunity to sit and talk. As adults, whenever we take part in sport we socialise afterwards, often in pleasant surroundings designed for the purpose.



Many shelters are open on all sides, but in some cases this has proved unpopular and uncomfortable to use as the young people are exposed to wind and rain. Some shelters now include partial screening on one or more sides. The users' needs for safety and some protection from the elements should be carefully balanced and designed for at each location.

The correct location of shelters and sports areas has proved to be the most difficult to resolve. Local residents are concerned about noise and behaviour, the local authority and youths are concerned about their safety or that of the equipment. The size of any proposed shelter needs to be in proportion to the immediate surroundings. The objective should be to achieve sufficient views for safety of users and as a deterrent to vandalism, without excessive annoyance to the nearby houses.

The National Playing Fields Association has a document called the Six Acre Standard which recommends minimum standards and distances for outdoor playing space. It is widely recognised as a good reference document. Whilst the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents, RoSPA, produces a number of booklets on children's and young people's facilities. Documents from both these organisations have recently been updated and provide a good source of information.

Possible benefits of a youth shelter project

For youths:

- a place to go and meet that is non-confrontational
- facilitates young people's development by learning about independence and socialising
- develops involvement and pride in their neighbourhood
- is a constructive rather than destructive experience
- reduces boredom if associated with a sports facility
- removes a possible first step towards crime
- team games provide a physical outlet for emotions and energy
- improves the employability of project team
- all round visibility allows users to feel safe



For the community:

- reduced damage, graffiti, crime and fear of crime
- enhanced community harmony
- children's play areas remain undamaged and useable
- reduced maintenance costs.

But there is also potential for the following problems if the shelter is poorly designed or located:

- gangs could dominate the shelter
- availability of drugs and under-age drinking and drug taking
- conflicts between groups about use/abuse
- litter and maintenance cost - who pays? Some parish councils may be reluctant to commit themselves
- noise and annoyance to nearest residents
- graffiti, possibility of obscenities
- the next generation will need to be given ownership
- not easy to link to other education or youth service activities
- solid sides reduce visibility and may increase risk of bullying and intimidation.

Don't expect youth shelters to solve many of the broader issues - this is one idea to help with some common problems, but it is more effective to use several approaches at the same time than to rely upon one. For example, if drugs are a problem in the area, tackle that issue as well. A youth shelter may experience some of the above problems, but aren't those problems going to occur anyway?

Shelters will not necessary encourage the problems, as alternative locations to congregate will always be found. For example if graffiti is a problem in the area, consider providing a dedicated wall for graffiti. Guildford in Surrey built a graffiti wall, in a town centre park, which is painted white every few months, they found this has reduced graffiti on other buildings in the town.

Consultation



To enable proper consultation to take place it is important to work closely with the young people involved. This could be in the form of a youth council or youth sub-group steered by an appointed councillor. A specialist youth out-reach worker may be appointed to assist and advise.

A 'planning for real' exercise using maps and photographs could be used to involve the wider community where there are a number of locations or options to be considered.

Youth involvement is often very difficult at the start of a project but a number of good ideas have been used to overcome this. Initially consider an invitation with a lucky number on it to be drawn at the consultation event. Don't draw the lucky number too soon and have a gift that will appeal, such as music vouchers. Some communities and schools have held discos or barbecues as an incentive to get all the local youths along to a meeting. The aim is to avoid a formal, unrewarding and probably poorly attended traditional meeting.

To assist in starting this process consider seeking sponsorship from local businesses which could benefit from reduced problems, also try to involve local schools.

Schools

When involving your local schools consider the following school-based activities:

- a design competition
- suggest an English language class writing a questionnaire and letters to potential sponsors
- maths students can evaluate data
- the debating society can help run the 'planning for real' exercise
- geography students can survey potential sites
- technical drawing students can produce scale drawings of the best designs
- the sixth form can go on work experience placements to departments in the local authority where the idea needs processing (this could also speed up decisions)
- consider involving youths on local authority sub-committees



Lighting

When consulted about one proposed shelter, 75 per cent of local young people expressed concern about the safety of the location as a meeting place. Lighting may provide an increased level of safety and increase the usability of the shelter, it also makes the shelter and its users more visible, but light pollution is an issue for rural areas.

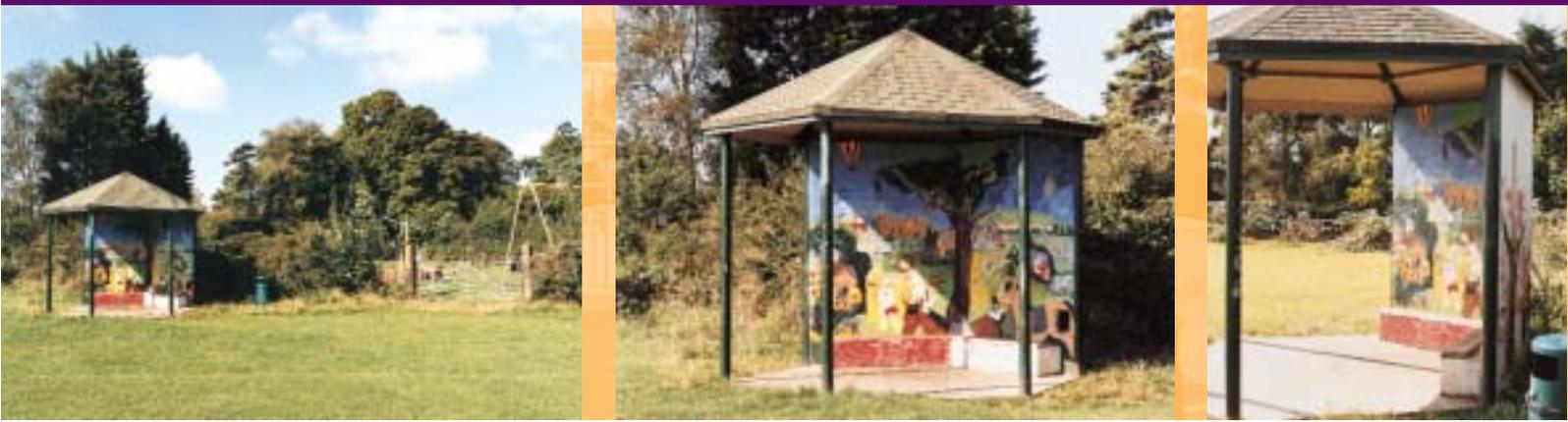
It should be the end users (i.e. the young people) who decide if it needs to be lit or not. We would expect most young people to like one side or section illuminated, or it may be better to light the main path to the shelter, and so indirectly light the shelter itself. The local authority will probably be concerned by the cost of getting power to the location, and this may be a constraint. Automatic lighting systems are far less prone to vandalism.

If a seating area is combined with sporting activity then the shelter will be used more if it has lighting. In Botley, Oxford there is a combined youth shelter, play wall and basketball area. It has three large floodlights, one is automatically on until 9:30pm, But if an organised game is required you can book the other two floodlights as well. All three automatically go out at 9:30 p.m.

At Yarnton in Oxfordshire a children's and youth area is in a playing field which is sited next to the main road through the village. Hedging and fencing separates the playing area from the road. Lighting was considered and a simple solution was provided by the county council, who put in extra light units on the adjacent street lamps, in effect making them double light columns. This gives 'borrowed' light to the play and youth area, which is just enough to see what is happening. The hedge is kept one metre high so dwellings on the opposite side of the road can still have natural surveillance of the area. The site was designed as a linear park with the recreation areas progressing in catering for ages from the very young up to a youth seating area and their preferred types of sports equipment.

Case studies

Marcham youth shelter



Marcham, Oxfordshire

In 1997, a survey was sent to each of the 340 parish councils in Oxfordshire asking if any area had a free facility for young people. Only one council responded positively. In 1987 the village of Marcham near Abingdon was experiencing the usual problems with youths hanging around the local shop the council decided to speak to the young people and ask them what they wanted. The answer was a - place of their own.

A concrete bandstand style, shelter/meeting place was designed and built, decorated by the youths and sited beside the children's play area. Since then problems of anti-social behaviour have been reduced and the children's play area is hardly vandalised. This youth shelter is six-sided, with seats and high walls on two sides. The open design was at the request of the youths.

Every few years it needs redecorating as generations grow up. New teenagers are provided with the materials to redecorate it and therefore take ownership. A litter bin is provided and as a result the area around the shelter is normally litter free. One security-type light was installed, which rarely gets vandalised. The shelter was strong and as vandal resistant as possible. The upright posts are round and made of steel – fireproof and difficult to damage or climb. The undersides of the roof are free of handholds, while the bench seat is solid and wide enough to sit on but not wide enough to lie on. During the day it doubles as a shelter to watch cricket, as the young people requested that the shelter was placed next to the local cricket field.



Banbury, Oxfordshire

In 1997 Cherwell District Council (Oxfordshire) installed four specially designed sports and recreation facilities for youths. Each unit has an enclosed basketball court, which also serves as a five-a-side football pitch. On the outside there is a basketball net and a seating area. The facilities are floodlit until 10 pm. The units cost approximately £40,000 each and have been placed on larger council estates. The council's leisure department confirms the facilities are very popular, and are used as a recreation and gathering area. There has also been a dramatic reduction in complaints from residents about youths and anti-social behaviour. The cost of repairs to young children's play equipment has dropped by 25 per cent, a saving of £10,000 in the first year.

Older youths and, on occasions, adults use some of the seating areas on a Friday and Saturday until 2am for meeting, eating and drinking. This does not cause a nuisance to local residents because they are far enough away from the housing. However, the next morning the area is littered with beer cans and fish and chip papers. Whilst not ideal, the litter used to be deposited all down the street, and in residents' gardens. Now, the council controls and manages the problem by only having to attend one location to clean it up instead of a whole street. Complaints from residents in these areas about noise, litter and damage have also dramatically reduced. Cherwell District Council is installing more units, believing the expense to be fully justifiable in providing a much-needed facility. In less dense housing areas the council is just installing seats, which are proving popular with both young people and adults during the day.

The Netherlands

Eindhoven, a town in Holland, provided a wooden shelter for the youths of the area. After just two weeks it was burnt down. Local councillors spoke to the youths, expressing their disgust at what had happened. The youths said that they did not know it was for them and so they had no respect for it. After fund-raising, a new shelter was built and this time the youths were fully involved in the project. It was rebuilt in wood and, after three years, it remains well used and intact.

Shelter and sports wall, Milton Keynes.



Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

An audit of sports needs and a survey of residents clearly identified ball games in residential areas as a problem. The council and police frequently received phone calls about nuisance behaviour in the area. The Development Corporation acted upon the survey results and installed a football wall, with cricket stumps and a basketball hoop.

A wooden bandstand with benches was built nearby to be used by anyone as a park bench with shelter. The only problem identified by the Parks Trust, which maintains the shelter and football wall, is the unexpectedly high level of use. The cost of maintaining the grass around the wall is higher than anticipated. Litter is now all in one place and, although unsightly, it is easier to clean up.

The associated football wall is very popular and has not suffered from any damage during its six-year life. The shelter is used by all ages during the day, and by teenagers in the evening.

Burnley, Lancashire

For some time police in Burnley had been responding to complaints of anti-social behaviour by youths. A police operation used video cameras to film bad behaviour and then confronted parents with the evidence. It emerged during questioning that the youths didn't have a safe place to meet, which would not disturb the neighbours. A joint youth shelter project was launched and a £12,000 three-sided youth shelter was built in a park area.

Over a 12-month period, reports of nuisance behaviour reduced by 29 per cent in the whole town and by 50 per cent in the streets near the park. Vandalism to play equipment in the town's parks reduced by 87 per cent to just £70 a year, from £580. This example was nominated for several awards. Many other shelters have been proposed, but have lacked residents' support for a location that the youths accept as being safe!



Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

This area reported problems of nuisance behaviour, damaged play equipment and conflicts over 'no ball game' signs. Some residents wanted the 'no ball games' rule to be enforced. The signs are very difficult to enforce: in one month the police received and responded to more than 100 nuisance behaviour calls.

The following grid shows the costs of repairs to damage caused to three normal play areas over the last eight years. In November 1997 a youth shelter was installed near to the Haydon Hill play area. The other two play areas are in adjacent residential areas to Haydon Hill. The only apparent cause for the dramatic reduction in damage is the consultation process and installation of the youth shelter.

Repair Bills for	Haydon Hill	Denby Walk	Bedgrove Park	Total Cost
1994/5	£900	£270	Not built	£1,170
1995/6	£566	£196	" "	£762
1996/7	£1,910	£2,536	£86	£4,532
April/Nov 1997	£800	£449	£1423	£2,672
Dec1997/ March 1998	30 pence	Zero	Zero	30 pence
1998/May 1999	£69	£30	£179	£278
May 99/May 2000	£230	Zero	£254	£484
May 00/May 2001	£250	£500	£350	£1,100



Bradford, West Yorkshire

A housing association, as part of a regeneration project, consulted its tenants and identified a lack of facilities for teenagers. A full size basketball court within a metal fenced area was built. Although not a youth shelter, this is an interesting play area from which to learn some lessons. It is located on a square of green space, closely surrounded by houses.

The area is well used, but often by a few dominant groups who are noisy and annoy the residents. The benefits have not yet been evaluated, but the area appears to have two problems. The facility is too close to the houses and, secondly, the single narrow entrance into the court was identified by several youths as a problem. It is easily dominated and controlled. One youth said: "It doesn't feel safe to use, as the bigger boys could arrive and trap you inside."

Thurrock, Essex

A partnership between police and the council's 'cleaning and greening' department consulted with young people and residents to try and solve the youth nuisance problem. As a result a 'teenage village' was built, made up of three small seating areas linked by ramps, close to an area where there had been problems.

The number of nuisance reports fell from an average of 30 a month to an average of five a month, this was monitored over a two-year period. Following this success, 14 similar structures have been built in Thurrock. Only one has been damaged. Each one cost £7,000 but most of this money is covered by sponsorship from local businesses. Following consultation at the nearest school and with residents, each one is placed in the most suitable location.

Witney, Oxfordshire

In the 1950s a 900-home residential estate was built to cater for the workforce of a nearby factory. The main focal point of the estate is a parade of eight shops. For a number of years residents have complained



about youths who gather outside the shops in the evenings, sitting on the low walls and playing ball games in the car park. The police have attended on many occasions and spoken to the youths but little could be achieved, as there are no other places on the estate where the young people could meet. The housing association that now manages the estate allocated funds for a youth amenity and a residents' meeting was called.

After various suggestions, the meeting accepted the idea of a youth shelter. However there was a great deal of opposition when it was proposed to place it on the grass area immediately outside the shops. That was until a senior citizen stood up and said that she had been one of the first residents on the estate moving in as child with her parents. She explained that when she became a teenager she met and played in front of the shops with all her friends.

After she grew up and married, she had a house on the estate and when her children became old enough to go out in the evenings they went to the shops. On the way to the meeting that night she spoke to her grandchildren who were also outside the shops. This proved the point that wherever a youth facility was placed, the shops would always be the focal point for young people.

A teenage shelter was provided outside the shops and is well used, the low walls were removed at the same time and replaced with railings, whilst a wooden park bench was provided for adults. The seats are popular but there is still the problem of ball games in the car park, which may not be solvable.

Before, the shelter was built a working party was formed between the residents' association, housing association and police. The youth service provided a youth worker to meet with the teenagers outside the shops and showed them various catalogues of seats. They chose the style and colour and also suggested the location.

Planning permission was required and all went well until the council only approved the seat if it was coloured green and not the bright mauve the youths wanted. As a compromise a green coloured shelter was built and at the end of the first year no complaints had been received about it. It is well used although there are always some who favour sitting on the stairs that lead to the flats above the shops.

Sports facilities issues to be considered



When young people are consulted, they often ask for some sports equipment and also somewhere for spectators to sit. The key to success is providing something that the youths want, and not what we think they want. There are more sources of funding for sports facilities than there are for youth shelters so consideration should be given to combining sports and seating areas. Shared facilities for use by schools and the wider communities are also eligible to apply for extra funding.

Play walls

Young children want to play football and it is easier to use a wall as a goal when only a few people are playing. When this wall is part of your home it is very annoying. A simple wall to kick against can easily be incorporated into the design of a youth shelter or a more elaborate sports facility. This simple provision will reduce nuisance in housing areas. A play wall can also include a climbing wall, a basketball hoop, and other activities.

Sport facilities

Skate ramps are also very popular, as are basketball courts which provide a very flexible space that can be used for many other team games. The materials used will dramatically affect the cost of the facility, and also the noise, maintenance and life expectancy of the equipment. A recent project in the centre of High Wycombe has developed an unused area under a flyover. Other projects have also recently been launched with varying degrees of difficulty. The public perception of the noise and nuisance caused by a skate park, for example, need to be considered, and where possible distances from homes increased to address it.

Legislation

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a duty on local authorities including planning departments, to consider Crime and Community Safety in most decisions they make. The Department of Environment circular 5/94, 'Planning Out Crime' also clearly states that crime prevention is a material consideration in the planning process. Providing facilities for young



people to reduce crime and improve community safety are clearly issues that must be considered by planners. It is also the duty of all other council departments and councillors to make sure that crime prevention and community safety issues are included in all their decision-making processes. Depending on the location of a youth shelter or sports facility, planning permission may be required. Housing developments may need to include a wider provision for recreation and planning departments often refer to the document Planning Policy Guideline 17 (PPG17) as a source of reference. Many district councils also have their own leisure department policies for the number of play areas required. The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) produces a standard that has been seen for many years as the main guide to recreational facilities, called the Six-Acre Standard.

Parish and town councils also have to abide by the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act and there is also a provision for parish and town councils to spend money on crime prevention schemes. Section 31 of the Local Government Rating Act 1997 states: "A parish or community council may, for the detection or prevention of crime in their area, install and maintain any equipment, establish and maintain any scheme, or assist others to install and maintain any equipment or to establish and maintain any scheme."

Standards

The British Standard for outdoor recreational multi-sports equipment and youth shelters is: Product Assessment Specification 30 1998 (PAS 30) any contract for items supplied and installed should specify conformity.

Check list



Each specific solution will be different, but the general process for arriving at a solution should follow the sequence below:

- clearly identify your problem
- if it involves young people, ask them how they see the problem and what their solution would be
- if they want a place to go would a youth shelter do the job?
- what sports or team game facility would they like it linked to?
- ask them to set the design brief or draw it
- involve them at the start and in all the subsequent processes
- should it be lit at night?
- involve the young people in fund-raising and building projects
- establish a method for handing on ownership to the next group every year, by painting it, or raising more money for maintenance or extra equipment

Conclusions

Don't do it without:

- clearly identifying the local problems
- ensuring young people want it
- checking the nearest residents will at least tolerate it
- it is safe in terms of equipment and surroundings
- it is regularly cleaned and maintained
- it is conveniently located so that it gets used

The shelter may not be the most important product of the project; the process of involvement, empowerment and training may do more for the young people involved than the shelter itself.

Evaluation indicators menu:



Problems and their costs

When appraising the possible value of a youth shelter, or a sports system, it is worth doing a cost benefit analysis. It will cost money to build and maintain a youth shelter but it may cost more to do nothing, as shown below:

The cost of not installing a shelter

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Community buildings | - graffiti removal, youths congregating, annoyance to other users. |
| Education | - exclusion of offenders, reduced performance, early leavers |
| Housing department | - complaints about youths, ball games, damage to garages |
| Leisure department | - damage to play equipment, litter, graffiti |
| Local authority | - complaints from residents |
| Police | - prosecutions, patrols, responding to calls, investigation, poor relationship with young people |
| Residents | - groups 'hanging around', fear of crime, noise, litter, ball games played against walls and fencing, loss of pride in an area |
| Shop keepers | - youths congregating, litter, graffiti, loss of trade, closure of business |
| Public companies | - damage to bus shelters, graffiti, complaints |

. . . and many others

Potential project costs for consideration

Construction	Consultation	Design
Health & Safety issues	Insurance	Land
Lighting	Materials	Maintenance
Planning	Staff training	

For benefits see previous section.



Further advice and help can be found from a number of sources, these include:

- Sport Industry Federation. Tel: 02476 414999.
- Council officers can advise on National Lottery assistance.
- Local authority sport and leisure departments.
- National Children's Bureau and Children's Play Information Service
Tel: 020 7843 6303.
- National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Tel: 020 7833 5360.
- Nearly every county has a Playing Fields Association.
- Police architectural liaison officers / crime prevention design advisers.
- Royal Society Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). Tel: 01480 411384.
- Sport and Play Contractors Association. Tel: 02476 416316.
- Youth service.

Funding sources

Virtually all district councils or unitary authorities employ an officer to investigate and apply for funding for various projects. They have details of funding sources, both local and national, and can help in completing the application forms. There are various stages in applying for funds and the more planning involved the better the chances of success.

- Plan as far ahead as possible as funding can take several months
- Describe fully your organisation and who is involved in it
- Identify what the problem is in your community
- Identify how you know what the problems are and what you need to do to solve them
- Detail how your project is working elsewhere
- Explain how it will work in your community – the benefits - timescales – the equipment – and any special requirements
- Detail your budget, who is contributing, how much, and what other funding has been applied for
- Show how your project has the support of the local community and authorities
- What are the unique selling points of your project and organisation?
- List the outcomes, are they long term and sustainable?



- Are you going to monitor and evaluate the results and identify what else is happening in your community and/or neighbouring areas?
- Get to know the organisation you are apply to for funding - what are their policies, priorities, and interests, who or what have they funded in the past? What sizes of grants are available? Do they require match funding?
- Take time to complete the application form, check it carefully for accuracy, think about supporting material e.g. plans, photographs, letters of support, positive images.
- Check the small print, what do they want for their money, what strings are attached?
- End by summarising how funding will benefit the project for the whole of the community.

Common questions

Q Should youth shelters be lit at night?

It depends on where they are sited. If lighting is installed there should also be natural surveillance from nearby houses. Some shelters have lights and these often automatically go out between 9:00pm and 10:00pm. As lighting can be expensive to install and run, consider a location close enough to an existing street light. The top could be changed to have a double unit, to light your proposed location.

Q What is the cost of a youth shelter?

Small units start at approximately £1500

Q Am I limited to one source of funding?

No, it is often best to apply to a number of sources. Funding providers like to see that you have applied to other organisations for money. Don't forget to always show that you are supplying some money yourselves and give details of all other contributions.

Q Youths are spilt into different age groups will one shelter cater for all of them?

Some designs do allow for separation, which can be an advantage as different age groups, and sexes want to be separate.



Q A lot of youth shelters have an 'open' design. Do they need protection from the weather?

There has to be a balance. The shelters should not be too enclosed so that people feel trapped in them, and no one can see inside them. One side could be solid to keep out the elements, but try not to put this where it will form a 'hide away' area.

Q How do you get young people to the first consultation meeting?

Why not consider an invitation with a lucky number on it, and then have a draw for a prize such as a CD voucher. A local business may wish to sponsor it. Or how about a free disco with displays around the walls about possible youth facilities. One council organised a free barbecue in the summer to get all the young people together. It is difficult to get young people to a formal meeting initially, but once that has been achieved future meetings are far easier.

Q How do youth councils work?

They are mostly ad hoc and a separate section of the main council. There is no national model as to how they function. Remember young people will probably not be interested in the politics of councils or the legal procedures by which they have to conduct their meetings. There needs to be trust and often there is a long lead time for their formation. Another way forward is to appoint a councillor as a liaison point between the youths and the council, so they have some one to formally speak on their behalf.

Q Is planning permission needed?

If the shelter is on local authority land that is designated for leisure use, and the facility will be adopted by the council for maintenance purposes, then it does not normally require planning permission. Sometimes, however this is a useful consultation and decision making process, that can enable a sensitive case to be democratically and openly debated and considered. This would not replace the need to consult young people fully during the early stages before planning.



Companies

Endorsement

The Sport and Play Contractors Association can independently provide a list of companies who are able to offer suitable products.

Neither The Home Office nor the police service can endorse any particular company or its products.

However, Thames Valley Police would like to thank Base Leisure and SMP Playgrounds for assisting in the research and production of this document.



Base Leisure

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Internet www.smp.co.uk

Both Base Leisure and SMP Playgrounds Ltd products conform to PAS 30.

Suggested reading:



Sport England Guidance Notes

Multi-Use Games Area
Planning Permission and Statutory Consents
Floodlighting

Cost £3.00 each and are available by telephoning 020 7273 1500.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents produce a number of publications about safety standards, risks, planning and design of play areas and guidelines for wheeled sports activities. Tel: 01480 411384.

The National Playing Fields Association produces a number of documents on standards and guidelines. Tel: 020 7833 5360.

Books available at most local authorities.

- A Guide to Company Giving
- A Guide to the Major Trusts (Volumes 1 and 2)
- NPFA Cost Guide
- The Sports Funding Guide
- The Complete Fund-Raising Handbook

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This guide is also available on the Thames Valley Police website:
www.thamesvalley.police.uk/crime-reduction/shelters.htm

Thames Valley Police would like to thank everyone who helped produce this guide, especially district and parish councils.

"Crime prevention advice is given free without the intention of creating a contract. Neither do the Home Office nor the Police Service take any legal responsibility for the advice given."

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