

# Working with young people: roles and responsibilities



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# Introduction

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In this course, we look at the roles that are taken when working with young people. We focus on what those working with young people *actually do*, starting with some analysis of roles. We show that, in the context of work with young people, the term is more than simply a statement about who does what: it also says something about the kinds of relationships we form with young people and the values we bring to our work. We then move on to discuss roles in relation to the 'bigger picture' of organisations and projects that are concerned with young people.

This OpenLearn course provides a sample of Level 1 study in [Education, Childhood & Youth qualifications](#)

# Learning Outcomes

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After studying this course, you should be able to:

- describe and analyse interventions by practitioners working with young people
- describe the key responsibilities of practitioners working with young people.

# 1: Thinking about roles

## 1.1 Preamble

'Role' is a word we use all the time, for example 'my role is to do the ironing while she sorts out the blocked drain in the kitchen' or 'my role is to ask the difficult questions at meetings'. Here we suggest that, in the context of work with young people, the term is more than simply a statement about who does what; it also says something about the kinds of relationships we form with young people and the values we bring to our work. To help with this analysis, we are going to look at roles in terms of actions, characters and philosophies.

- **Actions:** the interventions that are made in the course of a typical meeting or activity with young people.
- **Characters:** the pattern of interventions that are made. We represent these in terms of 'characters' which workers will play from time to time, such as the 'facilitator' or 'supervisor'. When and how these characters are brought into play will depend on the apparent needs of young people and the personal, professional and agency values of those who work with them.
- **Philosophies:** the overall framework of values which informs the actions we take and the characters we play in working with young people.

Before reading on, it is worth remembering that we create categories in order to understand, to describe and to compare. You can make up your own mind whether or not our three categories and their labels help you to describe and understand your work and that of others.

## 1.2 Actions

In Activity 1 below, the purpose is to observe and identify some of the actions or interventions that adults make in their day-to-day work with young people. Some examples of these individual actions are:

- making contact
- listening
- suggesting
- giving information
- challenging assumptions.

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Factory clip 1](#)

### Activity 1: The actions we take

0 hour(s) 40 minutes(s)

Now view the Factory, Clip 1 (above) Here you see three detached youth workers – Andrew, Akkas and Kasem from The Factory project – out on the street making contact with young people.

Make a list of what you observe the workers actually doing. You may need to watch the clip more than once. Make a note of the actions taken by each of the workers.

Alternatively, you may prefer to do this activity in your own workplace. Observe and then list the actions you or your colleagues take in one evening or within a specific activity.

#### Comment

You will not necessarily use the same words as we have to describe the actions you observed the workers taking in this clip. You probably noted, for example, that they were distributing leaflets about future events, and about Eid – a Muslim festival – in particular. Linked to this, there were consent forms to be given out. At other times, Andrew, Akkas and Kasem were simply listening to young people, or finding out about them. More generally, throughout the evening, they were making contact with the young people who were out and about. Later on in the clip, we see Andrew offering to get hold of an application form and then we see Akkas facilitating an informal discussion about sexuality. At the end of the evening, the three workers discuss what they have accomplished and fill out an evaluation form.

In completing Activity 1 you might have wanted to use more than one label for what you saw the workers doing. This is not surprising as there are many ways of describing the same activity, and they often overlap. For example, listening and making suggestions can be ways of showing an interest. Giving certain kinds of information can be part of protecting a young person.

One activity can also serve different purposes. Take, for example, 'listening':

- The police will listen to a young person primarily to elicit information to assist with peace-keeping, community safety and crime detection.
- A doctor will listen to a young person primarily to make a diagnosis.
- A counsellor will listen to a young person primarily to help them explore a personal issue.
- A friend will listen to a young person to show they are a friend, that someone is interested in them and to further their friendship.

As someone working with young people, you may have listened for different purposes – even in the same group meeting. They are not exclusive to work with young people but can be found in other work contexts and also in our personal lives.



## 1.3 Characters: the Ally and the 'Emotional worker'



In this section we describe seven 'characters' who often appear in work with young people, as well as in other types of informal education:

1. The Ally
2. The 'Emotional worker'
3. The Catalyst
4. The Mentor
5. The Advocate
6. The Facilitator
7. The Supervisor.

We will first characterise the role each of them plays, and then identify particular issues relating to each role.

### 1.3.1 The Ally

**Description:** The image we have of an ally is that of a dependable if sometimes critical friend, who likes us and who is committed to hanging in there with us through thick and thin. This can be incredibly supportive to young people as they make difficult transitions into adulthood, particularly where consistent parental support is not available.

**Issues:** Young people need support and approval. Some get constant messages from other adults in their lives – parents, teachers, neighbours – that they are bad, stupid and unlovable. Sometimes they only get any attention when they behave in this way – and so they persist. Finding some aspect of them that we can genuinely like can stop or even reverse this potentially downward spiral.

To help us do this, it may be useful to separate liking them from liking their behaviour. However, faced with behaviour we consider to be appalling, unacceptable or thoughtless, it is not easy to see someone as fundamentally good, intelligent and capable. This is when our understanding of young people can help bring a different perspective to our work.

Unlike a teacher, a worker in a youth-offending team, a social worker, or education welfare worker, many of those working with young people view their work as largely on the young people's terms. Young people are not required to see a youth worker; they do so of their own volition. This is a key factor in being able to play the role of an 'ally'. However, this does not mean that boundaries do not need to be set. Being an ally does not protect you from being in a situation where there is a conflict of interest or where you are unsure about how best to act in the best interests of the young person. In the clips of Cowbridge youth centre you will see Guy offering support to the young people at the club, but also being sensitive to the boundaries of his involvement.

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Cowbridge clip 1](#)

### 1.3.2 The 'Emotional worker'

**Description:** This is not a worker who is constantly overwhelmed by their emotions – though expressing emotions does have its place. It means being able to acknowledge and work with the strong emotions in ourselves and the young people we are involved with. Young people are a complex mix of emotions – sometimes angry, disappointed, wretched, but also excited and joyful. 'Doing emotional work' (Fineman, 2000) means being prepared to work with the young people's emotions in individual and group settings rather than avoid them. Goleman (1996) contends that 'emotional work' develops qualities such as optimism and resilience on the part of the individual and the 'emotional worker'.

**Issues:** In many work settings, emotions are seen as private, or perhaps messy and inconvenient. Certainly, this tends to be the case in schools where handling the feelings of large numbers of people in an enclosed space is challenging, potentially disruptive to the teacher's main aims and therefore often suppressed. It is also true in many families. Intense expressions of emotion are sometimes too much for adults to cope with, and in the wider community the expression of strong feelings by young people, whether anger or boisterousness, can be frightening or viewed as unacceptable.

What is sometimes referred to as 'emotional literacy' is the ability to register and take account of the strong feelings that young people have. In order to achieve this, workers need to develop an ability to deal with strong feelings in others, and this means being comfortable with their own feelings. In other words, being able to 'recognise what I am feeling so that it doesn't interfere with my thinking' (Orbach, 1999).

## 1.4 Characters: the Catalyst, the Mentor and the Advocate

### 1.4.1 The Catalyst

**Description:** A catalyst is something which changes the speed of a reaction. Those who work with young people often need to act at the interface between the young person and the opportunities that are available for their personal and social development. In simpler

terms, we can say that the worker as catalyst 'makes things happen', providing stimulus, challenges and opportunities.

**Issues:** Acting as a catalyst can involve taking risks. One worker in an inner city youth club decided to organise an event to which none of the young men would be allowed entry if they weren't wearing a tie. Some would view this as inappropriate, demonstrating how out of touch the worker was with youth culture. However, it did produce all manner of reactions and conversations among the young people. The event was very well attended and was talked about years afterwards.

Being a 'catalyst' implies a relationship of power which can be viewed as positive or negative, depending on the outcome of the intervention, and who is doing the judging. So extending young people's experience can be interpreted as 'workers deciding what is good for young people', but it can also be seen as 'opening doors'. On the clips from The Factory project, notice how the workers extend the experiences of the young people they meet through their street project.

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Factory clip 2](#)

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Factory clip 3](#)

## 1.4.2 The Mentor

**Description:** This character might also be described as an advisor or guide. Whilst mentoring or advising is the main focus of some jobs, it also forms one aspect of many jobs in this field. The role of the mentor is to present choices and provide advice based on a more extensive life experience.

**Issues:** This is a very powerful position and it can sometimes be difficult to resist being seen as 'all knowing'. However, there are times when the experience of the young person is beyond the capability of the advisor or mentor to deal with. In these situations mentors must step aside and refer on to a more specialist advisor who is better qualified to deal with the issue.

The adult guide will sometimes see their role as protecting young people from the dangers of the adult world. This can lead to young people being simply told what they should do 'for their own good'. A more developmental approach to guidance aims to leave decision making in the hands of the young person, whilst continuing to provide support. However, it is important to remember that all forms of guidance seeks to influence young people, and these interventions are a form of control over the decisions that young people make.

There can be real tensions for a worker when their judgement about what is best for a young person is in conflict with the policy of their organisation or agency. For example, the policy may state that young people can get certain kinds of support only if they agree to take a certain course, sign up to a certain belief, or stop using drugs immediately and completely. The worker may feel that such conditions are unrealistic or inappropriate.

There are situations where the aims of guiding or empowering young people can be undermined by requirements for measuring predetermined outcomes.

### 1.4.3 The Advocate

**Description:** The formal meaning of 'advocate' is speaking on behalf of someone, as a lawyer does in a courtroom. The idea of young people developing an 'active voice' is also considered an important value in work with young people. In some settings young people are encouraged to advocate for themselves, with the adult's support.

Advocacy occurs with both individual young people and with groups. The table below gives some examples.

#### Examples of advocacy with individuals and groups

	With an individual young person	With a group of young people
Acting on behalf of (they aren't present themselves)	Case conference	Liaison with, for example, the local leisure centre
Acting in a supporting role	Talking with the young person's parents about a problem	Supporting a group of young people in putting their case to the local council for a skate park
Formal situations	Being a character witness in court	Advocating the needs of young people in a public meeting
Informal situations	Chatting to a young person's parent informally about how well s/he is doing	Encouraging a local councillor to take a more developmental approach to anti-social behaviour

Advocacy has strong official endorsement as a role to be played. The revised Office for Standards in Education, England (Ofsted) framework for the inspection of youth services seeks evidence that those working with young people:

act as advocates for young people and enable their views to be articulated in local and, where applicable, regional, national or international contexts.

(Ofsted, 2004)

**Issues:** *Working with individuals:* the worker is often faced with making choices. For example, a young person wants to attend a residential but is concerned how best to seek permission from their parents/carers. The worker might decide:

- to suggest that they speak with the parent/carer on the young person's behalf
- come with the young person to talk with the parent/carer
- help the young person think through how they might introduce the idea with the parent/carer, and then support them through the outcome of the encounter.

Many feel that the route chosen should depend on the young person's own decision. Factors that a worker might consider when making a decision are: the ongoing relationship between the young person and the parent/carer, any history between the parent/carer and the youth group, any religious or cultural issues, and the degree of skill and self-confidence of the young person. The adult may feel the young person is about to make 'the wrong decision' and may need to check out this feeling with the young person. As in all such work with young people, we need to be aware that our own experiences will

be influencing our judgement in ways that might not be in the best interests of the young person.

*Working with or for groups:* Those working with young people are also acting as advocates for their collective interests. In Clark's (1996) terms, they are ideally placed to be the 'connecting system' between the 'system' of the young people and, say, in some villages or estates, the 'system' of a group of adults complaining about young people's behaviour. In Christensen and O'Brien's (2003) study, *Children in the City*, the authors suggest that living in the city is as much about negotiating relationships with other human beings as it is about living in material places and spaces. They see the street as a point of transition between the home, the neighbourhood and adult life. Streets are contested spaces and groups of young people often want and need support in finding their share of that space. Young people need adult allies in neighbourhood affairs – adults who can interrupt the daily barrage of how awful young people are and promote a view of young people which is more positive.

## 1.5 Characters: the Facilitator and the Supervisor

### 1.5.1 The Facilitator

**Description:** A facilitator works closely with the individual or group of young people to help them achieve a task and learn from the experience. Implicit in a facilitator's role is the belief that the young people involved are competent and, with the right information, support and motivation, can meet their goal. The term 'scaffolding' is sometimes used, meaning that the worker provides a support structure around the task. If the young person wobbles, the scaffolding can keep them on track. The support structure can be gradually dismantled as young people develop their own skills and are able to work with less or no support.

**Issues:** There are always difficult judgements to be made about when to step in and provide support, and when to let young people find their own way; whether to allow them space to learn through active experimentation, even when the risk of getting it wrong could be damaging to self-confidence or lead to the failure of a project. In the clips of Madcap you will see Gawaine and Steve talking about their roles, and the importance of providing a space for young people to try things out and take responsibility for the outcomes.

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Madcap - Steve's role](#)

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Madcap - Gawaine's role](#)

## 1.5.2 The Supervisor

**Description:** This role is essentially to create and maintain an environment in which young people feel physically safe. It is fundamental to the successful running of any youth group. It is about maintaining an overview of the dynamics, finding ways of interrupting unsafe behaviour in a way that is firm but 'light', being around, showing an interest whilst at the same time not getting hooked in by attention-seeking.

**Issues:** A lot of large and noisy young people rampaging around may be very intimidating for quieter, younger people. It might also lead to physical harm to individuals, to furniture and to buildings. Similarly, projects for young people are not by definition 'psychologically safe' places – they have to be made so. There can be direct or indirect bullying and oppressive language, particularly linked with racism, sexism, homophobia and disablism.

A common complaint of those who work with young people is that they constantly find themselves playing this soft-policing role, leaving less time and energy to engage in more developmental work. However, it is important to remember that practitioners have a legal responsibility to protect young people from abuse and harm.

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Madcap - clip 1](#)

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Madcap - clip 2](#)

### Activity 2: Workers talk about their roles

0 hour(s) 45 minutes(s)

Look at Madcap, Clips 1 and 2. How many of the 'characters' we have discussed here can you identify?

Comment

In many cases, workers are playing a composite role, drawing together several of the characters we have described. For example, Steve at Madcap might be seen as playing both facilitator and catalyst. He talks about 'injecting' enthusiasm, 'pulling out' what's inside their heads, finding out what they want, involving them in a creative process. The way he works with young people, working intensively to start with and then gradually withdrawing and making himself redundant, illustrates the process of 'scaffolding' within the facilitator role. Gawaine talks about the importance of knowing when to intervene with help and advice and when to let young people take the initiative.





## 1.6 Philosophies

In your overall approach to your work with young people, you will be taking on different characters at different times. Being able to identify these, and take on the most appropriate character at any given time, is an important part of working professionally. However, this is not simply a process of assessing the situation and then selecting the most appropriate character to deal with it. Working with people at any age is far less precise and technical than this; it involves referring to our instincts and feelings about the situation, and engaging with the values that we bring to the role. So, the individual actions we use and the characters we deploy can only be fully understood when placed in a framework of values and purposes. We have chosen to call this a 'philosophy', that is a set of understandings about the nature and purposes of the work which informs all our actions. The statements below illustrate some of the assumptions that might be made about young people and the interventions in their lives that would therefore be useful. While we describe these as characterisations, they are also caricatures. Most people's frameworks of values and purposes will be more complex and draw on a range of ideas and assumptions.

### 1.6.1 A. Worker as protector

Young people are not yet full people. They are essentially rather weak and helpless and need a lot of nurturing and caring for. They also need protecting from the traps and many potential evils of society. Society is increasingly complex and they need guidance to find their way around. It's the adults' job to provide this nurturing and protection and to 'prepare them for life' until they in turn become adults and will play their own part in moulding the next generation.

### 1.6.2 B. Worker as personal reformer

Young people are flawed human beings and potentially quite wild and 'untamed'. They are the cause of much misery to a lot of adults, and don't promise at all well for the future of

society. At least, though, they are mouldable. It's the adults' role in society to reform and domesticate them because adults know best. This needs to take place through instruction, and occasionally through punishment. We need to show them 'the right way to be', and tell them how to behave so they will eventually – if they deserve to – be able to take their full place in society.

### 1.6.3 C. Worker as liberator

Young people are born good, powerful and with great flexible intelligence but through even the most well-meaning family upbringing, through their school experience and life in the community, they pick up hurts which close down their intelligence and separate them from that awareness. It's the adults' job to help them reclaim that awareness, to hang in there with them even when their hurt makes them behave badly, give them information and support and, when appropriate, help them learn from experience and encourage their good thinking and their attempts to take charge of their lives. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, suggests that 'To be a good liberating educator, you need above all to have faith in human beings, you need to love'(Freire, 1971, p. 62).

### 1.6.4 D. Worker as community developer

Young people are a fully contributing part of their communities already and their views and interests need to be taken as seriously as those of any other grouping. It's the adults' role to help articulate their needs and concerns and to give them information and support to help them communicate these appropriately in the right quarters. Adults may need to act as advocates with or on behalf of young people to ensure their voice is heard. Young people also have responsibilities in relation to community development and, again, need to be helped to recognise these and fulfil them.

### 1.6.5 E. Worker as institutional reformer

The problem for young people is the way they are excluded and oppressed by the main institutions of society. Few are really listened to at school – and certainly not about how they could be better taught. Many are oppressed by the forces of law and order – and even by local community groups who are threatened by often harmless if boisterous behaviour. The job market wants to slot them into dead-end jobs. The doctors often treat them as appendages of their parents. These institutions need to treat young people with more respect. So, as a worker, I must spend quite a bit of time with these institutions encouraging them to reassess their service in relation to young people and involving young people in any re-design.

(Adapted from an idea by Leigh and Smart, 1985.)

## 1.7 Understanding Roles

### Activity 3: Understanding roles

0 hour(s) 30 minutes(s)

Look back at the philosophical positions on work with young people described above and answer these questions:



1. Which of these fits most closely with your own philosophy on working with young people?
2. If you are currently working with young people, which of these philosophies fits most closely with the way you work at present?

Alternatively, you might want to look at the workers at Factory, Madcap, or Cowbridge (in the previous clips) and match them with the philosophical positions.

#### Comment

Whether we are aware of it or not, roles are not value free. The interventions we make in our work with young people cannot be understood only by the actions we take. These need to be understood in relation to an overall philosophy of what we are trying to achieve. In some cases the roles we take will be influenced by factors which are beyond our own personal values. Organisations have their own priorities and philosophies, as does the government. The roles we play are shaped not only by our own skills, judgements and philosophies, but also by the wider context in which we work. These external factors can create real tensions for practitioners as they try to work within their own values whilst carrying out the tasks for which they and their organisation are funded.

In this activity we asked you to match philosophical positions with examples of practice. In fact it is unlikely that you will find any exact fits, since most practice is a mix of several underlying philosophies. It is also common to find different practitioners within one project who take differing stances towards their work.

So far, we have been looking at how practitioners think about the roles they play in their work with young people. In Activity 4 we ask you to turn again to the clips and listen to what the young people involved in the Madcap and Factory projects have to say about the practitioners who work with them.

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Madcap - Jackie](#)

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Madcap - James](#)

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Madcap - Callier](#)

Click in the box below to start playing the video.

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## Madcap - Dan

## Activity 4: Listening to young people

0 hour(s) 30 minutes(s)

Listen to what Callier, Jackie, James and Dan say about working with Steve in the Madcap project.

Under Factory, listen to what Kawsar and Paul say about working with Andrew (see Factory clips 2 and 3).

Make a note of the roles which these young people identify, and what they say about them.

## Comment

Here we describe only a few of the roles the young people identify as helpful to them.

At Madcap, Callier, Jackie and James all see Steve as a facilitator. According to Callier, Steve is someone who 'brings out the best' in you. When encouraged to compare Steve to her teachers, Jackie talks about the quality of the personal attention she gets. James comments that Steve is 'good at talking and getting his point across' and also 'a good listener'. He values the freedom he is given to make the music that interests him: 'he's happy with anything you want to do, so that's the cool thing about Steve'.

At The Factory, Kawsar and Paul have a lot of respect for Andrew. They feel understood and listened to. Kawsar says, for example, that Andrew 'knows how we are and right he understands like culture wise'. Paul values the guidance Andrew has given him: 'he listens to you no matter what the problem is ... it's nice to feel he has time time for you'. He sees Andrew as an ally and a mentor who has helped to 'put me on the rails'.

Whatever struck you from these interviews, it is clear that listening to young people's views is a rich source for reflection on roles. If you are currently working with young people, you may want to discuss with them their experiences and expectations of you and your colleagues.

## 2: Roles in a wider context

### 2.1 The diversity of roles

So far we have looked at the roles that are taken in work with young people. Now we move on to discuss roles in relation to the 'bigger picture' of organisations and projects that are concerned with young people.

The aim of this section is to help you do three things:

- gain an idea of not only the diversity but also the complexity of different roles involved in working with young people
- consider what is meant by organisational roles
- clarify the underlying values of an organisation.

### 2.2 Roles within agencies, projects and organisations

The next activity is intended to widen your understanding of the variety of roles undertaken in the field of work with young people'.

#### Activity 5 Variety of job roles with young people

1 hour(s) 0 minutes(s)

Below you will find 10 advertisements for jobs. We offer them as a snapshot in 2005 of this increasingly wide-ranging field of work with young people.

As you read the advertisements, try to identify and describe each of the following:

- the name of the organisation or service
- their particular focus
- the target group
- the organisation's purpose and underlying values
- the role being offered or described.

Some information – like underlying values – will be implicit rather than explicit, so you will have to work out what you *think* the organisational values might be.

## 2: Roles in a wider context

### Youth Work in Cyber Space!

On-line Young Carer Support Workers  
2 part-time posts 13 hrs per week (flexible)

Fixed term contract. Location: flexible - The Trust has offices in London and Glasgow or you can choose to be home-based. Some home-based evening and weekend work required.

Young carers are children and young people who look after a relative with an illness, disability, or substance problem. They need information, advice, fun and a listening ear but must remain unsupported. This project, the UK's first national web resource for young carers is designed to reach isolated and hidden young carers. Our two Young Carer Support Workers will have the skills and experience to engage with individuals and groups of young people, offering support via email, supervised message boards/ chat rooms (training given) and leading with direct services across the UK.

### Arts Based Youth Worker

35 hrs per week, 28 day leave

A unique opportunity has arisen to offer a full-time position to an arts based youth worker.

We are looking for someone who:

- Will work from a background of active Christian involvement
- Will develop weekly evening sessions which will progress into performing projects
- Will support and encourage existing youth projects
- Will take on board any additional responsibilities that the line manager deems necessary

We are looking for an arts based worker who can facilitate the development of youths from a deprived area through the expressive medium of art and performance.

The applicant should be prepared to be part of the diversity pastoral team and the funding committee. They should also be able to take on board the values and experience of the local community.

A good understanding of administrative and IT skills is an advantage.

The applicant should also be up to date with current child protection and equal opportunity policies.

### Open New Doors

We are an established and fast developing registered housing association committed to delivering quality housing and support services to asylum seekers and refugees. We expect a lot from our people but, in return, the rewards and career development opportunities are excellent.

#### Team Leader (Young People Services)

Supporting young refugees and asylum seekers is a critical part of our business and you will play a huge part in ensuring that this service delivery is of the highest quality and in-line with the requirements of the Children Act.

With 2 or more years' experience of working with young people and experience in the management of accommodation or residential services, you will also have experience of staff supervision. A knowledge of the Children Act 1989, the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and best practice for services to 16 and 17 year olds young people is essential. We in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of housing management, you will also have an interest in asylum and immigration policy.

The Independent Living Foundation is working in partnership with the County Council and Commissions to support young disabled people and their families to access Direct Payments to have greater choice and control over their support arrangements.

#### YOUNG PERSON'S INDEPENDENT LIVING ADVISOR

(28 hours per week)

To work with individuals and groups of disabled people aged 13 to 25 who wish to explore options for taking control of their lives.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate:

- > A thorough understanding of and commitment to the principles of Independent Living
- > An understanding of the difficulties young disabled people and their families experience
- > Experience of supporting young people and involving them in developing services
- > Knowledge of social care legislation, including Direct Payments
- > Ability to work in a multi-agency environment
- > Excellent communication and organisational skills
- > The ability to travel

#### Programme Manager

Responsible for leading a group of 24 young people in a structured learning environment. Role requires the ability to plan, support the fundraising for and delivery of educational events, as well as sound administrative, communication, office and IT skills, enthusiasm and self-motivation.

If you think you have the necessary skills (whatever sector you are currently working in) - and would like to be part of an organisation that is changing how London works - we'd like to hear from you.

### Youth Project Worker

#### YOUTH SERVICE

Could you enthuse and motivate young people whilst promoting healthy lifestyles, using ICT and music technology whilst creating a healthy lifestyle in a school?

We will not ask you to do all this but if you have the vision for youth work roles, then you could be the person we are looking for. We are looking for someone who is creative, innovative and imaginative, who can work from a converted school building, alongside the children's fund or working within a school. Some of the work is already established but there is scope to develop specialist work as well as the opportunity to engage with the Council's 14-19 strategy. A generous allowance may be available for assistance with relocation expenses.

**Opportunities within the Youth Offending Service**

We have a proven track record of meeting government targets in reducing the seriousness and frequency of offending amongst the target group. This post offers an exciting and rewarding opportunity to be part of a project in achieving to reduce the use of custody. In order to deliver this pioneering project we are looking for the following:

#### Programme Manager - Groupwork Specialist

This is a pivotal role which requires you to be creative, highly professional and motivated with a clear vision to work with young people and their families. You will contribute to planning, implementing and evaluating work with young people and their families. You will also be responsible for the delivery of a range of groupwork programmes to young people to help reduce the risk they present from re-offending and to help them to move on to a better future.

You will have a comprehensive understanding of the "What Works" agenda related to offenders.

#### VOLUNTEER MENTORS NEEDED FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS INSTITUTE

Could you give up 2 hours a week to help change the future for a young offender living without prison?

We require enthusiastic volunteers, male and female, aged over 23, to become mentors to male young offenders.

No qualifications necessary, volunteers needed from all walks of life. Full training given with ongoing support and verbal appraisal.

Visits are a minimum of 2 hours per week for 4 months inside the prison and up to 12 months in the community.

- ALL training dates must be attended and take place at weekends from 10.00-5.00 am
- OCN qualifications in mentoring can be gained.

#### Training & Development Worker - Peer Education Team

35 hours per week

Peer education for three years (experience dependent on funding)

Black Health Agency is a voluntary organisation working to deliver health education projects with Black African, Caribbean, Asian and South Asian communities.

You will work with the Peer Education Project Team to deliver health education projects to young people in the community.

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### Comment

These advertisements show not only the diversity but also the complexity of work with young people. In them we find 'young carers', 'young disabled people', 'asylum seekers and refugees', 'young offenders' and others. Roles range from development workers, to advisers, counsellors, mentors and supervisors.

Alongside the roles with young people, there are what we might call 'organisational' roles such as fundraising and administration. These jobs all involve a particular area of expertise, related to the target group. For example, in advertisement A, familiarity with online support would be an advantage. In advertisement C, where the target group is 'asylum seekers and refugees', the applicant will need knowledge of housing; in E and G, applicants will need experience of supervision and management.

Some organisations are explicit about their underlying values in their advertisements. For example, in B the name of the organisation does not appear, but the fact that the advert mentions 'active Christian involvement' suggests it is a project supported and funded by a Christian organisation. The focus is arts and performance; the target group is 'youths from a deprived area'. Christian values are likely to be underlying the service. The young people may be seen as vulnerable and in need of protection. Key roles seem to be 'facilitator' and 'community developer'.

## Conclusion

This course has examined the diversity of roles played in working with young people. We have looked at roles on three levels:

- the individual actions that practitioners take
- the characters they play in different situations
- the philosophical position they take, which influences the actions they choose and the characters they play.

We have presented roles as being more than a list of tasks and responsibilities attached to a particular post within an organisational structure.

We argued that roles are:

- fluid: the roles we take, even in the course of a single day or session, will change in response to different situations and challenges
- values driven.

You have seen that the ways in which we carry out our work, whilst often constrained by factors outside our control, are nevertheless an expression of our personal and professional values. In addition, you have gained an idea of a range of projects and services for young people, and the roles that are involved. This has helped you appreciate the not only the diversity but also the complexity of different roles involved in working with young people. Finally, you have considered what is meant by organisational roles and looked at the underlying values of an organisation.

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