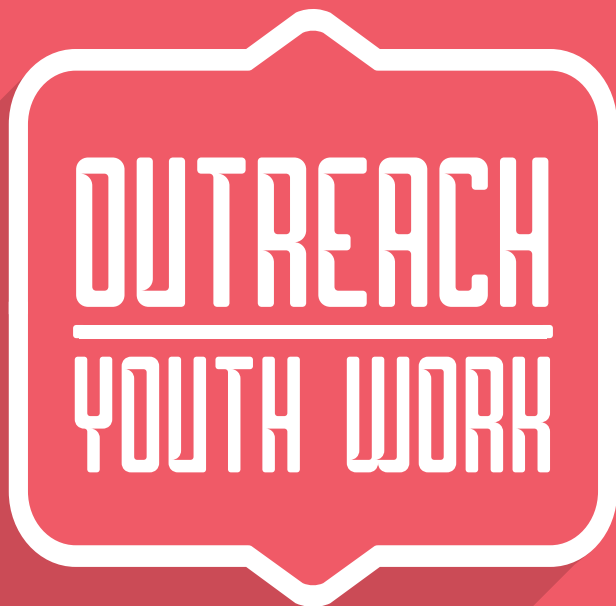


OUTREACH YOUTH WORK

HANDBOOK



NATIONAL INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO OUTREACH YOUTH WORK

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO OUTREACH YOUTH WORK!

This guide is primarily intended for outreach youth workers and their supervisors to support induction, but it can also be utilised by more experienced professionals in directing their work, developing it and seeking interfaces with partners. This guide will increase your understanding of the background, values and ethos of outreach youth work as well as its basic task as defined by the Youth Act.

Outreach youth work is special youth work in which the aim is to reach young people under 29 years of age who are outside of education or working life or require support to reach the services they need. Outreach youth work offers young people early support if they want it. Outreach youth work strengthens young people's abilities to move forward in life. Outreach youth work is voluntary for the young people.

Outreach youth work is present among young people and offers an opportunity for a safe and confidential adult contact. Outreach youth work aims to find solutions to young people's problems and questions together with them, supporting them in seeking the services they need and want.

The roots of outreach youth work are in outreach work, which has been carried out in various forms

among socially excluded groups for decades now. Finnish outreach work has drawn influences from the other Nordic countries and Europe; outreach youth work has been particularly influenced by social work aimed at young people in Norway, in which outreach work plays a significant role. Other strong factors in the background are the ethos, values and methods of youth work, such as supporting growth, offering continuous support and strengthening inclusion and agency.

Outreach work is based on listening and negotiation – what young people want and what commitments they are prepared to make. The starting point of any work aimed at change is the involvement of people and communities in determining and reaching the objectives. In addition to the individual level, outreach work is also performed at the communal level, since changes in communities support the individual process of community members. The core of outreach work is in correctly understanding individuals' declarations of intent, finding means of achieving change and being involved in establishing communal and societal prerequisites for change (source: Amet ry). Outreach youth work reaches young people both in their daily environments and through networks.

Outreach work has been carried out in Finland since the 1960s. Back then, a new approach was adopted to work with gangs in particular: going out where the young people are. In the 1970s, according to the Norwegian model, work was carried out with young people who were considered to live in risk conditions. The work was profiled as work carried out on the street, where the focus was on special groups in a difficult situation outside the reach of services, such as drug addicts and prostitutes. The work is carried out in pairs, establishing contacts with young people on the streets and then also suggesting meetings outside the "field" (source: Välttämisen ammatillaiset, Vamos).

Outreach youth work has been conducted in Finland since the 1990s. In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Culture started funding outreach youth work trials in municipalities as part of the social strengthening service package. Outreach youth work was entered in the Youth Act for the first time in 2011, when the Ministry of Education and Culture also started providing municipalities with more regular support for organising outreach youth work. This enables a national, flexible and easy-to-reach local service for young people who are about to be excluded or otherwise require support for finding their own path.

Outreach youth work has been conducted in Finland since the 1990s...

2.

VALUES AND APPROACH

YOUTH WORKER'S ETHOS AND VALUES

All youth work is primarily governed by the Youth Act and the principles specified therein. In addition, there are guidelines for professional ethics in youth work (Nuorisotyön ammattieettinen ohjeistus, in Finnish) (Suomen Nuorisoyhteistyö - Allianssi ry and Nuoriso- ja Liikunta-alan asian tuntijat ry), which are intended for youth work professionals who have received training in the field and are working for municipalities, associations or the private sector.

According to the guidelines for professional ethics, the goal of youth work is for all young people to find their place as an individual and as a member of society in accordance with their resources and views. Youth work supports and enables the independent activities of young people, sees young people as individuals and group members, guides them towards positive solutions to conflicts and discourages prejudices. Through their activities and appearance, youth workers help young people believe in the future. Youth work is about meetings, encouraging education and doing things together. Youth workers find time when young people need it. They understand that youth work is built on young people's voluntary participation. Youth workers address wrongs and rectify injustices, intervene in activities that endanger young people's growth, development or health and act equally and justly, appreciating diversity.

Youth workers recognise the various needs of young people, care about them, are there for them and encourage them. Youth workers give young people time to learn about life and correct their own mistakes. Youth work strengthens the inclusion of young people in their local communities, different cultures and society, promotes their living conditions and well-being and builds and develops safe environments together with them. Youth work evolves with the needs of young people and youth cultures. Youth workers contribute to supporting young people in their daily lives and preventing social exclusion, helping them become involved, overcoming their fears and making their dreams come true.

Youth workers value their own work, act constructively and openly in the work community and collaborative network and strengthen the role of youth work by trusting their expertise, recognising their own professional identity and acting as developers of their field and skills. Youth workers share their expertise, learn from other professionals and take part in multidisciplinary collaboration, applying the strengths of youth work. They promote dialogue between various actors, respect young people and their support network and handle the information they receive responsibly.

Youth workers are supporters of growth and education, acting as interpreters for young people and their living conditions. They follow the discussion of youth policy and preparation of decisions, take part in the discussion and highlight the perspective of young people. Youth workers have the ability to question



things constructively and highlight societal problems. They encourage young people to influence things themselves, developing opportunities to have an influence together with young people, are aware of the starting points of their own work and organisation and look at partnerships, collaboration and external funding from this perspective. Youth work respects nature and life, takes the operating environment into account, intervenes in vandalism, encourages an environmentally friendly way of life and follows the principles of sustainable development. Youth workers choose nature-respecting, environmentally friendly alternatives and work methods and take care of their own well-being. Youth workers recognise and admit their limits, can make use of the service network for young people in their work and are able to distinguish between work and leisure as well as set limits in their relationships with young people. They maintain their competence and coping by taking care of themselves and keeping up-to-date with information on young people and youth work.

Outreach youth work follows the values and ethos of youth work with its roots in the tradition of outreach work.

Voluntariness and autonomy

– Young people determine their needs and make personal decisions on the directions in which they want to take their lives; the work is always performed on the basis of information provided by the young people. Young people can always choose whether they accept support from outreach youth work or not.

Focus on young people – Outreach youth work is carried out where young people are, when they need it and always in cooperation with the young people themselves. Outreach youth work is target-oriented work based on young people's needs. Young people set their own goals for their lives.

Respect – A comprehensive and humanist notion of people, respecting young people as they are, equality and reciprocity, recognition of human dignity and acceptance of young people's values.

Offering continuous support

– Outreach youth work supports young people in solving the challenges in their lives, finding the services that they need and sticking to them, and remains involved in their lives for as long as they want or need it. Everyone can always come back; “the door stays open.” An outreach youth worker is genuinely there for them.

Accessibility – Outreach youth work is always a free-of-charge service that is based on young people's needs and must have a low contact threshold.



On the young people's side, not on their behalf – Young people are actors who solve challenges in their lives and build their desired future themselves. Outreach youth work supports young people but does not solve their challenges on their behalf. They are personally responsible for their own lives. Outreach youth work motivates young people and supports them in making choices that are good for them.

Confidentiality – The cooperation between outreach youth workers and young people is based on trust, understanding, transparency and honesty.

Comprehensiveness – The work is governed by young people's comprehensive well-being, individual needs and the required services. The right timing of support and services is essential.

Multi-professional cooperation – While outreach youth workers are well familiar with the service network for young people, they are not experts in all fields. They investigate young people's issues together with them and are able to make use of the networks. They must recognise the limits of their professionalism and duties, being able to refer the young people on to other professional services as necessary.

Own personality and values – It is important to recognise your own values and the ways in which you can use your personality as a tool when meeting people. Your own values may be in conflict with the values of the work, organisation or young people. In this case, you must be able to commit to the values of the organisation and work and respect the values of young people.



GOVERNING ACTS

Outreach youth work, like other youth work, is primarily governed by the [Youth Act 1285/2016](#). Outreach youth work realises the goals of the Youth Act from the starting points specified in the Act. In addition, it follows the provisions governing outreach youth work. The Youth Act only binds outreach youth work funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture; outreach youth work organised by other sectors may also be governed by acts applying to the other sectors.

Youth Act, Section 2

The purpose of this Act is to:

- promote the social inclusion of young people and provide them with opportunities for exerting an influence and improve their skills and capabilities to function in society;
- support the growth, independence and sense of community of young people and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and adoption of skills necessary for this purpose;
- support young people's free-time pursuits and engagement in civic society;
- promote non-discrimination and equality among young people and the realisation of their rights; and
- improve young people's growth and living conditions.

The principles underlying the purpose of the Act are:

- solidarity, cultural diversity and internationality;
- sustainable development, healthy lifestyles, respect for life and the environment; and
- cross-sectoral cooperation.

Youth Act strongly guides outreach youth work.



3.

GUIDANCE
AND
STATE AID



**Outreach youth work
is based on voluntary
participation by
and cooperation with
the young person involved.**

Youth Act, Section 10

Outreach youth work

The mission of outreach youth work is to reach young people in need of assistance and provide access to services and other support designed to promote their growth, independence, social inclusion and life management skills as well as to improve access to education and facilitate entry into the labour market. Outreach youth work is based on voluntary participation by and cooperation with the young person involved.

When the local government engages in outreach youth work, it shall designate a local government official or other person contracted by the local government to assume responsibility for the implementation of outreach youth work. The outreach youth worker shall have adequate training for and experience in working with young people. Outreach youth work may be provided by a single municipality or several municipalities together. The municipality may organise outreach youth work by acquiring the services from an entity providing youth services. If so, the municipality shall ensure that the services are provided in accordance with this Act.

Outreach youth work shall primarily be initiated in response to the information provided by the young person him- or herself or his or her own assessment of the need for support. In addition, outreach youth work may be initiated in response to information provided by other authorities.

Other acts governing or linked with the work that one should be aware of:

In addition to the Youth Act, outreach youth work is also governed by other acts, and the work involves cooperation with many different sectors. For this reason, it is also good to understand the legislation that governs the activities of other actors in the network. It is a good idea to review the acts regularly, assess them in relation to your own work and consider with the work community and organisation how the various acts are realised and shown in practice.

- [The Constitution of Finland](#)
- [Non-discrimination Act](#)
- [Social Welfare Act \(in Finnish\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Act](#)
- [Personal Data Act](#)
- [Administrative Procedure Act](#)
- [Rehabilitative Work Act \(in Finnish\)](#)
- [Unemployment Benefit Act \(in Finnish\)](#)
- [Act on the Openness of Government Activities](#)
- [Act on Equality between Women and Men](#)
- [Act on the Student Admission Register, National Database of Higher Education Institutions and Matriculation Examination Register \(in Finnish\)](#)

PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

Outreach youth work involves handling young people's personal data stored in a client data file, which is the responsibility of the municipal body responsible for the administration of outreach youth work in accordance with the [Local Government Act](#). A data file description must always be prepared for the client data file. The data controller must prepare instructions for the processing of personal data and ensure that the necessary training is organised.

Information that can be disclosed for outreach youth work purposes only includes information based on which the young person can be contacted, i.e. identification and contact information. Such information includes the person's name, telephone number, e-mail address, address and, if necessary, personal identity code. Care must be taken when transferring the information, since the fact that a person is a client of outreach youth work can be considered information about personal conditions and, therefore, confidential. If a child welfare report, preliminary

child welfare report or report according to the Social Welfare Act has already been filed on the young person, the information need not be disclosed for outreach youth work purposes. Various electronic contact systems have been created regionally, such as the [Tajua Mut!](#) (Get Me!) operating model and [Välittämisen koodi](#) (Code of caring) model, through which a young person can be reported for outreach youth work. The young person and the parent/guardian of a minor shall be notified in advance in a suitable manner so that information regarding the young person may be disclosed for outreach youth work purposes.

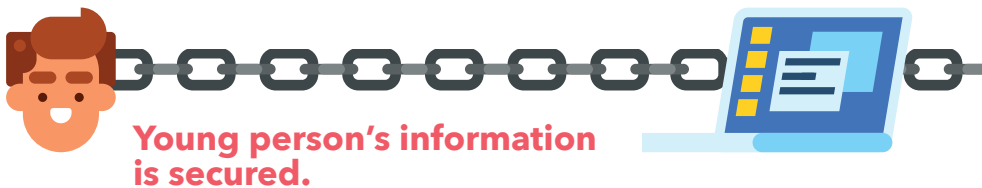
Education and training providers notify the local outreach youth work of young people who have discontinued their studies or not continued their studies after basic education. The Defence Forces and the Centre for Non-Military Service report young people who have been exempted from military or non-military service because of lack of fitness or have discontinued

their military or non-military service. The information is primarily disclosed at the consent of the young person and, if the person is a minor, of the parent/guardian. If the young person does not consent to the disclosure of information but the authorities consider that support is necessary, the information must be disclosed to the person's home municipality for outreach youth work purposes. The municipality should clearly specify the party to be provided with the information about the young person in need of support, and this must also be easily available on the municipality's website. The authorities can also decide not to disclose the young person's information, if it assesses on the basis of the available information that the person does not need support. Information will only be disclosed about young people under 29 years of age.

A young person's identification and contact information can also be disclosed to the home municipality by other authorities or Kela, when authorities consider this necessary based on information gained during work and taking into account the person's situation and need for support. The person's identification and contact information can also be disclosed for outreach youth work purposes by registered associations, foundations or other organisations offering free-time activities, if they consider that the person is in need of support. In this case, however, it is necessary to obtain the express consent of the young person and, if the person is a minor, their parent/guardian.

Outreach youth work is carried out confidentially on the basis of the information given by the young people themselves. Information disclosed for outreach youth work purposes can only be used in outreach youth work. Young people's information is handled carefully, and their matters are also discussed carefully within the work community – employees are only given access to information systems and data files to the extent required by their duties. Special care is taken to retain confidentiality when disclosing information (for example, using encrypted e-mail). Young people's information will never be disclosed to third parties or other actors without the express consent of the young person and, if the person is a minor, also their parent/guardian.

Outreach youth work will not disclose a young person's information without the consent of the young person and, if the person is a minor, their parent/guardian, unless the preconditions for a reporting obligation to authorities are met ([child welfare report](#), [report according to the Social Welfare Act](#) or [report according to the Criminal Code of Finland](#)). In these cases, the young person and, if the person is a minor, their parent/guardian will also be notified of the disclosure in advance, if possible. Outreach youth work records what information has been disclosed about the young person and to who. The young person and parent/guardian are entitled to know about the handling and disclosure of personal information collected during outreach youth work.



Young people's identification and contact information or other information collected during the work is not archived but will be promptly destroyed when no longer necessary for the performance of duties. The municipality may archive quantitative information relating to operations development from which no individuals can be identified. Corresponding anonymous statistics regarding young people in outreach youth work are recorded in a shared database through the PAR system or an equivalent client or statistical information system. The statistics can be viewed on the [Finnish youth work statistics website](#).

The Act on the Student Admission Register, National Database of Higher Education Institutions and Matriculation Examination Register (Section 5, 24 July 2009/560, in Finnish) specifies the disclosure of information to a municipality organising outreach youth work for performing the task in accordance with the Youth Act. This makes it possible to disclose information about young people left without a study place for outreach youth work purposes in the person's home municipality.

Outreach youth work records what information has been disclosed about the young person and to who.

Youth Act, Section 11

Disclosure of information for outreach youth work purposes

No information may be disclosed for outreach youth work purposes except with the young person's consent unless otherwise provided in this Act or other laws.

Regardless of non-disclosure provisions, information identifying the young person involved and his or her contact details shall be disclosed to the young person's home municipality for outreach youth work purposes as follows:

- an education provider shall disclose information on a young person who has completed his or her basic education but who is not pursuing any studies beyond the completed basic education;
- an education provider shall disclose information on a young person who ceases to participate in vocational education or general upper secondary education;
- the Defence Forces and the Centre for Non-Military Service shall disclose information on a young person who is exempted from military or non-military service because of lack of fitness or who decides not to complete military or non-military service.

The education or training provider, Defence Forces and the Centre for Non-Military Service may decide not to disclose information on the young person referred to in subsection 2, if they – considering the information available and the young person's situation and his or her need for support in the light of all the relevant circumstances – determine that he or she is not in need of services and other support within the meaning of section 10.

In addition, an authority other than an authority defined in this section or the Social Insurance Institution of Finland Kela may, regardless of non-disclosure provisions, disclose information identifying the young person involved and his or her contact details, if such an authority or Kela – considering the information available and the young person's situation and his or her need for support in the light of all the relevant circumstances – determine that the young person is in need of immediate support in order to access the services and other support.

If a registered association, foundation or other organisation offering free-time activities determine that a young person is in need of outreach youth services, they may, subject to the express consent of the young person or the consent of the guardian of a minor young person, disclose information identifying the young person and his or her contact details for outreach youth work purposes.

Those disclosing information pursuant to this section shall, in advance and using an appropriate means of communication, notify the young person or the guardian of a minor young person that information on the young person may, in the cases referred to in subsection 2 and 4, be disclosed for outreach youth work purposes.

Provisions on child welfare notices and anticipatory child welfare notices are set out in sections 25 and 25c of the Child Welfare Act (417/2007). Provisions on contacting social services for the purpose of assessing the need for support are set out in section 35 of the Social Welfare Act (1301/2014). If a party required by law to disclose information has contacted an authority comparable to social services, no notification needs to be filed with outreach youth work services based on the same information.



Youth Act, Section 12

Processing of information on young people by outreach youth services

The identifying information and contact details disclosed for outreach youth work purposes may be provided in electronic format. The information obtained in the course of outreach youth work or otherwise may be combined in order to identify the young people in need of support and to carry out the duties of outreach youth services. When the affairs of any individual young person are addressed in the context of outreach youth work, records shall be made of the party disclosing the identifying information and contact details of the young person, any further measures to be taken, the type of information disclosed and the parties to which such information is released. The file controller responsible for the processing and management of the personal information is the local municipality.

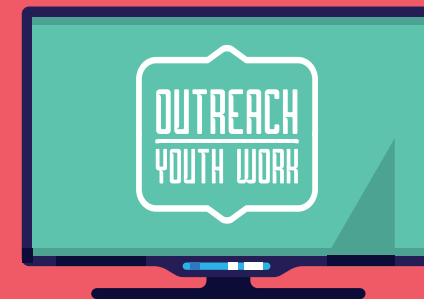
Information obtained in the course of outreach youth work may only be disclosed to another authority with the consent of the young person, or if he or she is a minor, with the consent of his or her guardian. However, a minor may make decisions regarding the disclosure of his or her personal information according to their level of maturity. All the information shall be promptly destroyed when no longer necessary for the performance of duties.

A person engaged in outreach youth work may not, without the consent of the young person involved, or if he or she is a minor, without the consent of his or her guardian, disclose to third

parties any information that may come to his or her attention in the course of the duties foreseen in this Act regarding the young person's personal circumstances, state of health, benefits received, supportive action or financial position.

Instructions for handling personal information can be found on the Ministry of Education and Culture's Youth workshops and outreach youth work web page.

More information on the EU's General Data Protection Regulation can be found on the website of the Data Protection Ombudsman's office (in Finnish).



STATE AID FOR OUTREACH YOUTH WORK



The Ministry of Education and Culture subsidises the recruitment of outreach youth workers with aid distributed through the Regional State Administrative Agency. The Regional State Administrative Agency grants state aid for outreach youth work. The purpose of the aid is to reduce the number of young people outside education or working life and promote the inclusion and community spirit of the young people. Discretionary aid may be granted for the recruitment of an outreach youth worker (max. €30,000/person-year).

[State aid for outreach youth work](#) is intended for supporting outreach youth work as specified in the Youth Act (1285/2016). The aid may be granted to municipalities or incorporated societies and foundations that have a valid contract with a municipality or municipalities on outreach youth work to be performed in the area. The aid cannot be granted to private individuals.

The purpose of the state aid is to reduce the number of young people outside education or working life and promote the inclusion and

community spirit of the young people. The aid is intended for supporting outreach youth work in accordance with the Youth Act (1285/2016). The Ministry of Education and Culture recommends that outreach youth work be carried out in cooperation with, in particular, education and training providers, One-Stop Guidance Centres, youth workshops and social services.

State aid is applied for in the Regional State Administrative Agency's [electronic services](#) using the "Valtionavustus etsivän nuorisotyön tukemiseen" ("State aid for supporting outreach youth work") form (in Finnish) for a calendar year at a time. The application period runs for about a month in September/October (for example, the application period for state aid for 2018 was 25 September–31 October 2017). More information on the grounds for granting the aid is available on the Ministry of Education and Culture's [Subsidies web page](#).

The state aid covers the outreach youth worker's salary expenses and also requires the municipality or outreach youth work organisation to provide self-funding for other costs of the

activities (activities, workspaces and tools, travel and training costs, etc.). The Regional State Administrative Agencies monitor the use of the aid, and the aid can be recovered if an employee hired using it has been performing duties other than outreach youth work in accordance with the Youth Act or has been absent from work without a substitute.

The use of state aid is monitored using the PAR system or an equivalent client or statistical information system. From the PAR system, organisational information and statistical client information is reported to the national PARKki database three times a year. Another system may also be used for the monitoring, but the party carrying out outreach youth work must respond to the annual national survey. Information taken to the PARKki database can be found nationally and regionally on the [Finnish youth work statistics](#) website.

The state aid covers the outreach youth worker's salary expenses .

4.

BASIC TASK & OBJECTIVES

YOUTH WORKER'S FOUNDATION AND GOALS

Outreach youth work may be provided by a single municipality or several municipalities together. The municipality may organise outreach youth work by acquiring the services from an entity providing youth services. If so, the municipality shall ensure that the services are provided in accordance with the Youth Act. While outreach youth work may be carried out by various municipal bodies (e.g. youth services, social services or employment services), it is still special youth work governed by the Youth Act.

The task of outreach youth work is to complement existing services, not replace them. The key task of outreach youth work is to reach young people who are either outside services or need continuous support and guidance in spite of receiving support services. The goal is to increase their abilities to commit to training or working life through strengthening their life skills and solving individual challenges. In addition to supporting individual young persons and groups of young people, outreach youth work has another societal task: to make the voice of young people outside services heard, underline deficiencies in services and highlight gaps in the social support network through which young people may fall. Out-

reach youth work produces information about young people's living conditions and current phenomena, since the work is performed where the young people are, with people who often know the weaknesses of the service system better than professionals do.

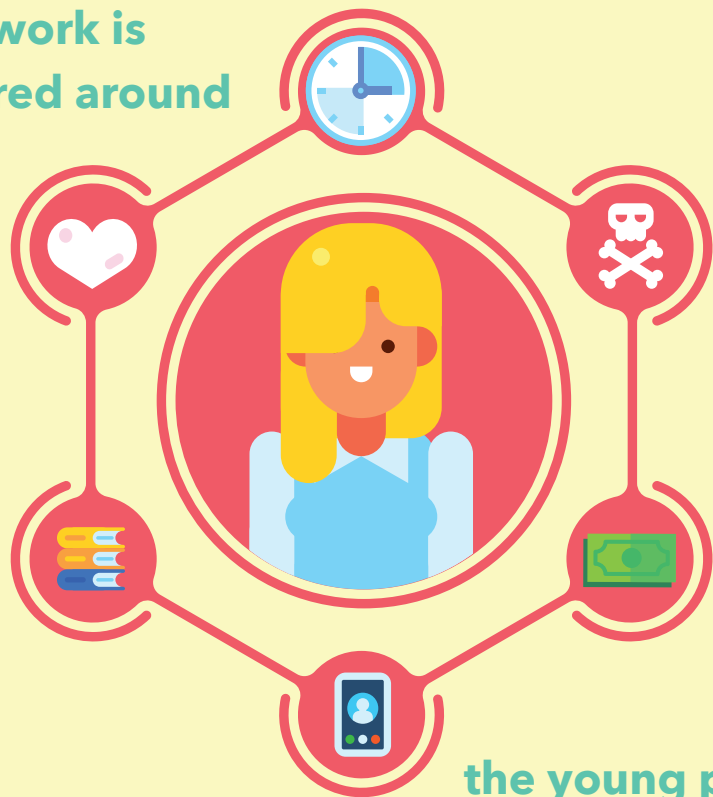
Outreach youth work is always free of charge for the young people. Outreach youth work applies a preventive approach to working with young people who often also have a need for corrective services. The work is sometimes highly intensive and moves on the interface between youth work and social instruction, but it is clearly anchored to youth work through the governing laws, ethos and basic tasks.

The purpose of outreach youth work is to support young people in building their lives so that they are satisfied and can move forward. The work is centred around the young people themselves; they are the actors who make their own decisions on the direction of their lives with the support of professionals. Outreach youth workers establish a confidential and respectful relationship with the young people, helping them commit themselves to the process,

Encounter is the key element in outreach youth work.



**The work is
centred around**



**the young people
themselves**

whose goal is to support their independence, inclusion and skills to build themselves a good daily life and future. Another key element in outreach youth work, as in all youth work, is helping the young people create peer communities for themselves. Outreach youth work is always voluntary for the young people and does not involve any sanctions or obligations. This lowers the threshold of accepting the service and starting cooperation.

Outreach youth workers are safe adults who take into account the comprehensive well-being of the young people, supporting them in all areas of life and respecting them as they are. They highlight the various expectations of society, helping the young people adapt their ways of life to these without having to compromise too much on their way of facing the world. Outreach youth workers are always “on the same side of the table” as the young people, supporting them in seeking the services they need and want and helping them access the services at the right time. Outreach youth work is mobile and wall-less work – work performed where the young people are. This may mean approaching young people to make contact (street work, educational institutes, shopping centres, etc.) as well as visiting offices and services with them.

**Youth workers
are always on
the same side
of the table as
the young
people.**

5.

TARGET GROUP AND ALLOCATION

WORK DEPENDING ON INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Outreach youth work is mainly targeted at young people under 29 years of age who are outside education, working life or services. However, depending on individual needs, the work may also be performed with young people who are already within the scope of a service. The minimum age has not been officially specified, but since the target group primarily includes young people outside services, the minimum age limit is often set around the time that people finish (or drop out of) comprehensive school. The majority of municipalities have set the minimum age limit at 13–16 years of age. The target group and the related focus areas of work must be regularly determined on the basis of local needs. As the party responsible for outreach youth work, the municipality decides the age group or other group of young people to be emphasised in outreach youth work. However, the emphasis does not mean that outreach youth work could ignore a young person who has been reported to it. Determining the target group requires surveying the local phenomena and demographic structure and the living conditions of the young people, in order to know the groups on which resources should be particularly focused at each time. Despite the allocation of resources, outreach youth work is intended for all young people who need it.



Young people may personally contact outreach youth work, if they feel that they need support or want to talk.

Outreach youth work should pay particular attention to groups of young people who have a higher risk of social exclusion for some reason – for example, linguistic and cultural minorities, young people in a weaker socioeconomic position and those with needs for physical or mental support must be taken into account when planning the activities. The groups that locally require more attention can be identified by surveying the target groups and the living conditions and opportunities of young people as well as networking with other actors (such as various support associations and linguistic and cultural associations, after-care in child welfare, Criminal Sanctions Agency or debt counselling).

The task of outreach youth work is to reach the young people reported through various channels until the young people either accept or refuse the service, turn 29 or permanently move out of the country, or when the party who reported a young person cancels the report due to the person's changed situation. In other words, the obligation to reach a young person does not end if the person's phone number is out of service or if the person cannot be reached otherwise despite attempts. Naturally, not all young people can be reached in any case. Even if young people are staying in another municipality, they are reported to the outreach youth work unit of their home municipality. This requires collaboration between the outreach youth work units of the municipalities.

Of these young people, those who feel they need support and are willing to accept it are the ones who end up in longer-term cooperation. The needs for support are often linked with finding something meaningful to do, finances, housing, substance abuse or mental health issues or making the future clearer, in general. Young people in outreach youth work may have highly challenging situations in life, so various challenges may be faced when meeting them. The organisation performing outreach youth work should prepare plans and instructions and train their personnel to prepare them for challenging situations. In addition, regular occupational guidance is essential. This ensures the safety and well-being of both the employees and young people.

Young people may personally contact outreach youth work, if they feel that they need support or want to talk. Various efforts have been taken to lower this threshold of contacting the service – outreach youth workers are present where young people are, both in social media and other environments, making their work and faces known. Their contact information is easily available, and marketing and communications are constantly developed. Young people may also contact outreach youth work via electronic contact systems, such as the [Tajua Mut!](#) (Get Me!) operating model or [Välittämisen koodi](#) (Code of caring) model in areas in which these models are used.

CONFIDENTIAL RELATIONSHIP

Work forms, methods and operating environment

The key in outreach youth work is creating a confidential relationship with the young people, helping them find their own inner motivation and surveying their strengths and opportunities together with them. The work is performed in various environments, from various starting points and towards the individual goals of each young person, so the forms and methods of work also vary greatly as needed. Essential elements of outreach youth work include individual guidance, entering environments in which young people are, guiding and accompanying them to the services as well as multi-professional networking, but allocated small groups and camps or trips may also be appropriate methods with a target group of outreach youth work. Small groups are assembled and camps or trips are organised when they serve the purpose of outreach youth work and the individual goals of the young people.

The key method in introductions, building trust and surveying the overall situation of each young person is discussion. This usually takes place at individual meetings, but small group activities in a safe peer group may also be a good platform. To lower the threshold for discussion, various activities may also be utilised in a manner typical of youth work. What is essential in the discussion and activities is highlighting the strengths of the young people

and identifying where they have room for development, helping them build a positive understanding of themselves, finding something worth pursuing in the future and strengthening their ability to establish relationships with other young people.

Typical goals for the work are social strengthening of the young people, strengthening their self-esteem, self-appreciation, interaction skills and social functional capacity as well as developing their life management and inclusion. Methods used to pursue the goals include individual guidance, practising daily life skills and interaction, regular peer group meetings and planning the future in a resource-oriented manner so that the young people retain their own agency and self-determination throughout the process.

Outreach youth work may also be there to support young people in various situations in life, from dropping out of school to a sudden crisis or an integration process, for instance. Outreach youth work is involved in the daily lives of young people, quickly reacting to both their changing situations and the needs of new people introduced to the service. Appointments can be arranged quickly, and young people can easily reach outreach youth workers when desired. Outreach youth work

exerts influence at various levels – the work aims to influence individuals, groups, the surrounding society and young people's living conditions.

Key elements of outreach youth work are meetings and individual guidance based on each young person's needs, but guidance and support may also be offered through peer group activities when they best serve the individual goals of the person. Outreach youth work and its methods are diverse and defined through local needs – outreach youth work must look like the area and its young people. Elements of outreach youth work shared nationally are the approach and objective, and methods that can be generalised to a great extent also include individual guidance, accompanying young people to services and multi-professional network collaboration.

It is natural for outreach youth work to act in various environments – the work is equally well carried out at the office, in various service points, on the streets, at educational institutes, in the nature and at institutions. Flexible working hours and the opportunity to move from one place to another are essential for dedicated and accessible outreach youth work. It is important to arrange meetings in places that can be easily reached by the young people. If necessary, the meeting can also take place at the young person's home if they find it hard to meet elsewhere. Outreach youth workers must be actively involved in multi-professional networks, go where young people are and be able to accompany them to various services. Young people's own environments are an integral part of their lives, so these must also be observed and respected in outreach youth work. Young people's inclusion in their environment and community should be supported whenever possible.



OUTREACH YOUTH WORK IN PRACTICE

FORMS OF OUTREACH YOUTH WORK:

Individual guidance

(e.g. building trust, surveying the overall situation, setting goals and supporting self-esteem and capabilities)

Group activities

(e.g. allocated small group activities, info sessions and themed groups)

Fieldwork

(e.g. systematic presence on the streets and in young people's environments with the goal of making contact with new young people, familiarising 9th graders and upper-secondary level students with the work by visiting schools and info sessions as well as accompanying young people to offices and services)

Network cooperation

(e.g. reports by authorities on young people, supporting young people in a multi-professional network and accompanying them to the services they need)

Online work

(e.g. visibility and communications in social media and meeting young people online)

Aikalisä (Time Out) activities

GOOD PRACTICES:

Making use of services produced by Finnish youth centres, such as the Nuotta coaching (in Finnish)

Making use of employees' strengths and special skills gained from various educational backgrounds

Actively following a certain age group (e.g. interviews of young people [one age group])

Allowing the young person to select the meeting place

Learning about, for example, leisure activities meaningful to the young person together with them

Regularly surveying focus areas and groups at which the work should be targeted (target groups and fieldwork)

Working as a partner with authorities and other actors or another outreach youth worker (occupational safety during home visits, peer support, reflection and sharing)

Five Steps process (source: International Guide on the methodology of Street Work throughout the World):

1. Studying the setting both theoretically (historical, social and cultural context) and practically (meeting people in the neighbourhood)
2. Presence on the ground belonging to the young people; observation and absorption of the culture, becoming a familiar face to the target audience and gaining their acceptance (repeated regularly)
3. Identification: saying who you are and why you are there, establishing your own place in the community
4. Establishing contacts and creating trusts – offering guidance and outreach youth work services
5. Guidance – group activities and individual guidance, strengthening the inclusion of young people in their own environment and community

Observation of the environment (knowledge of current phenomena and youth cultures)

METHODS:

K17 youth centre activities

(opportunity to make contact with young people, some of who may need the service)

Emotion cards and games

(in individual and small group activities)

Parents' meetings

(participation in parents' meetings at educational institutes and thereby making the work and your faces known)

Home visits

(to reach young people or when invited to a meeting, together with a work partner)

Arto - daily activities, assessment with young people

Pre-startti - together with the youth workshop

"Service interpretation"

(explaining authority jargon and services to young people as necessary so that they understand what the services are about)

Exerting influence locally, supervision of young people's interests, influence and enabling inclusion

"Walk in" on-call service hours at various locations

(that young people can easily reach)

Introductions and info sessions

Group formation

(participation in the group formation events of schools and educational institutes as part of making the work and your faces known, group formation of your own allocated groups using, for example, the Nuotta coaching [in Finnish] produced by youth centres)

Workshop activities, Starttivalmennus coaching

(offering continuous support also during the workshop period)

International activities

(e.g. youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service, International Cultural Youth Exchange)

READING TIPS RELATING TO METHODS, FORMS OF WORK AND OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS:

International Guide on the methodology of Street Work throughout the World

Well, what do you do? - Outreach youth work in Hämeenlinna (in Finnish)

Välittämisen ammattilaiset - Vamoksen käsikirja etsivään nuorisotyöhön (Professionals who care - Vamos handbook for outreach youth work, in Finnish)

"Ainoa hommani on auttaa sinua." ("My only job is to help you.") - Etsivän nuorisotyön hyvät käytänteet Etelä-Suomen alueella (Good practices of outreach youth work in Southern Finland, in Finnish)

Outreach youth work processes

Outreach youth work processes vary highly according to regional differences, operating cultures and young people's individual needs. With young people, every process is unique, and some of the phases thought out in advance may be reorganised, partially overlapping or skipped completely. Nevertheless, it would be good for the organisation to describe the entire outreach youth work process with a clear, repeated and developing process description that is used as the basis for planning, assessing and developing the work. It may also be a good idea to think about individual guidance processes in advance, although the direction, methods and goals are determined by each young person's own wishes and capabilities. It may be necessary to discuss the guidance processes and plan them together with partners to ensure that the transfer of young people from one service to another is as smooth as possible.

EXAMPLE: Outreach youth work planning, implementation and assessment process:

1. Survey - Regular surveys are important in order to know what is happening and who the work should be targeted at, perhaps also allowing us to anticipate certain rising phenomena

2. Selecting the key target group and determining its needs for support

- Based on the survey, we determine the key target group and find out how we could best meet its needs.

3. Reaching the group/individual - Finding ways to reach these young people (outreach work/other reaching methods) and make them committed (making contact and building a confidential relationship).

4. Work with individuals or small groups

- Guidance can help them find their own path

5. Guidance to services - Motivating the young people for the service, offering them continuous support, supporting their return to the community after the service.

6. Documentation, reporting and statistics

- Documenting the work (e.g. PAR system) and collecting effectiveness information (e.g. [Sovari - social strengthening indicator](#) [in Finnish]) as part of the daily work.

7. Utilising documentation and collected information in exerting influence

- Throughout the process, we produce information about the target group's living conditions and current phenomena and take it forward to the social discussion.

8. Assessment, reflection and development

9. Restarting the process

EXAMPLE: Guidance process:

1. Contact: The service may be contacted and the need for support indicated by the young people themselves, their family or friends or authorities.

2. Reaching: After the contact or report, we try to reach the young person through various channels. We will contact them as soon as possible after the contact, especially if they have contacted the service themselves (quick reaction, early support). We will try to reach the young person until we reach them, they turn 29 or the party who reported the person cancels the report.

3. Work: We work with the young person based on the information that they provide and towards the goals that they set.

4. Guidance to services: Guiding the young person to the services or activities they need (offering continuous support, if necessary).

5. Concluding the cooperation: Concluding the outreach youth work process together with the young person.

EXAMPLE: Individual guidance process:

1. Surveying the situation in life, building a confidential relationship and establishing an overall image - Presence and progress at the individual's own pace, building partnership and setting goals.

2. Guidance, motivation and meeting

- Systematic progress towards the goals set, strengthening the young person's agency and resources; the work is guided by the person's perspective, needs and goals.

3. Regular contacts throughout the process

- Commitment to the young person and process, interest in the person and their situation, caring.

4. Making the young person's rights clear throughout the process

- Ensuring that the young person knows what rights and obligations they have in this society and how these work in daily life.

5. Making the young person committed to assuming responsibility for their life

6. Assembling a network, guidance to services - The right timing of guidance, services and the work is of particular importance.

7. Monitoring the goals and further processing

8. Concluding the cooperation - Concluding the outreach youth work process together with the young person when the need for support has been met. The person should be aware that one can always return to outreach youth work when required; "the door stays open."

Meeting, support and guiding forward

A respectful meeting and the related skills are key in outreach youth work, like in all youth work. When meeting young people for the first time, we approach them neutrally, without expectations, and aim to create a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. At the meetings, we stop and listen to what the young people tell us about themselves and their needs for support, leave space for their personality and adjust our approach to suit their rhythm. We openly tell them what outreach youth work is and how it works. We make it clear that we are bound by confidentiality and an obligation of secrecy and describe the role of the outreach youth worker in promoting their situation. The principles of respectful, confidential and equal meetings apply to work with individuals and groups alike. In group work, we must also pay attention to equality – providing each young person with the right amount of space to take part in the activities and discussion and share their situation in the desired manner.

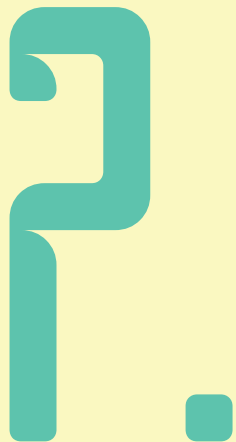
At meetings with the young people, we stop in the moment, are completely present as an equal, create an unhurried atmosphere and actively listen to their expectations and wishes. We find resources and strengths in the young people and consciously put them into words.

The meetings proceed in the young people's comfort zone, at their pace, in a solution-oriented manner towards mutually set goals, and they may occur face-to-face, in social media or by phone. The respect, interest and presence must also be conveyed to the young people during online or telephone meetings.

When meeting young people, the key is target-oriented progress towards their social strengthening and other goals, offering continuous professional support and stopping for the meetings, also when they occur spontaneously without a scheduled appointment. During the meetings, the discussion is led by the young person, and the outreach youth worker's task is to ask questions, show interest and pick up things the person says that might help in making their situation, wishes and goals clearer. The employee highlights the person's strengths and options, starting to motivate the person towards the required services, if necessary. When guiding the young person forward, it is important to describe the various options, service network and opportunities, so that the person feels safe when starting to work with another professional. If necessary, outreach youth work can support the transfer of the young person to the service "arm-in-arm".



The employee's own attitudes, values, emotions and possible hurry are always present at the meetings. It is important to be aware of these and aim to "reset your settings" before meeting young people so that the meeting can take place in peace. In addition, it is important to take into account the physical and mental safety and well-being of the outreach youth worker, young person or group of young people during the meetings.



OUTREACH YOUTH WORKER

YOUTH WORK PROFESSIONAL

Professional identity

The outreach youth worker is a youth work professional who specialises in matters relating to young people, youth, young people's living conditions and challenges as well as current phenomena. In outreach youth work, like youth work in general, employees are required to present an [extract from the criminal record](#) at the beginning of their employment relationship.

The outreach youth worker must have adequate training for and experience in working with young people. It is also recommended that they have experience in working with more challenging client groups and extensive understanding of matters relating to young people's lives. It is important for the worker to be able to set limits for themselves and the young people and be their own person, while still retaining professionalism and a certain distance. It is important to be able to recognise the limits of your competence and the emotions and values that guide your actions. The employee must commit to the values of outreach youth work, youth work and their organisation and have a humanist, respectful approach. A key element in the work is a genuine willingness to be on the young people's side and commit to both the work and the young people. Outreach youth workers must be able to put their work and expertise into words and market the outreach youth work service to networks

and young people. Networking skills are essential in outreach youth work, since a majority of the work is carried out in cooperation with other professionals.

Important characteristics for outreach youth workers include interaction skills, meeting skills, reliability, ability to withstand stress, courage to bring up even difficult things, empathy, flexibility and adaptability, tolerance of disappointment and change as well as ability to adopt new information in a versatile manner and utilise it in practice. The skills and information needed for outreach youth work live in the now and keep changing all the time, so it is important to maintain your expertise and develop it regularly. Outreach youth work is often fairly independent (often involving a work partner or team, though), and employees must be able to work and make decisions independently, rely on their discretion and also come up with creative solutions at times.

The employee must understand the limits and responsibilities relating to offering continuous professional support and building a confidential relationship – setting clear limits for what you tell about yourself to the young people and, on the other hand, remembering the obligation of secrecy regarding the young person's matters and being able to end the relationship as planned. It is also important to make a clear distinction between work and leisure. Sometimes the relationship also ends before the process is completed – for example, when the employee takes up other tasks. In this case, it is necessary to transfer the necessary information discreetly (taking into account issues covered

by the obligation of secrecy) to a colleague so that the work can continue as smoothly as possible with both the young people and the partners.

Outreach youth workers may work at a youth centre, lead groups or organise camps, as long as they perform their work in the role of outreach youth work and not as substitutes compensating for a lack of resources in other youth work. In practice, this means that their presence at the youth centre or organisation of group activities must be justifiable from the perspective of outreach youth work and, therefore, the employee is not part of the resources with which the municipality's youth work organises leisure activities as part of its basic task. An outreach youth worker may participate in network meetings organised by the TE Office, social services or other actors but, as a rule, the participation must be requested by the young person and the employee must be there to support the person. Outreach youth work cannot be a permanent part of the row of authorities and professionals that a young person meets the first time they come to a network meeting, or at least the role of outreach youth work in these situations must be made clear from the very beginning. It must be ensured that the young person really accepts outreach youth work services voluntarily and not under pressure from other actors. In diverse operating environments and in the middle of various methods, the goals of one's own work should be kept clear – outreach youth work is more about attitude and approach than a bunch of certain functions or methods.

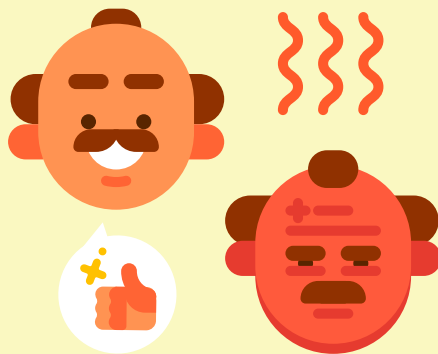
Occupational well-being and coping at work

Outreach youth work is involved with young people in challenging situations in life, and outreach youth workers' coping and well-being at work may sometimes be challenged by the situations and stories of young people that they face during the work. In addition, the operating culture of outreach youth work has traditionally involved the ideal of an independent approach – not necessarily sharing the work or its burden even if it were possible, unless structures have been created for this.

The coping and occupational well-being of outreach youth workers is most commonly challenged by the organisation's poor understanding of the nature of the work, personification of the work in the eyes of the client, working alone, minor interaction between the supervisor and the employee, being left alone in difficult situations, excessive workloads and a poorly defined job description and pressure to perform tasks that are not necessarily part of the basic task. Well-being and coping may also be undermined by things like poor structures in fieldwork, lack of crisis support, working outside office hours, possible lack of trust between the supervisor and the employee or poor work atmosphere. It is important to pay attention to these when planning measures to support occupational well-being and coping.

Creating structures in the organisation that support occupational well-being is primarily the res-

pensibility of the organisation and supervisor, but employees must also assume their share of responsibility. Such structures include occupational guidance, clarifying the organisation's vision, developing the relationship between the supervisor and employees, delimiting the work with the supervisor, training the supervisor in the contents of outreach youth work, working in pairs and teams, opportunity to influence the work and how it is done, participation in outreach youth work peer meetings and regional network activities, debriefing and reflection on situations faced at work, reviewing the job description and demands of the work and ensuring that they are reflected in the salary, developing skills and opportunity to participate in training, clarifying the outreach youth worker's role in networks, opportunity to influence the working hours and thorough induction.



Coping at work is greatly influenced by what kind of support the employee gets from the organisation and supervisor, what kinds of structures for coping at work and occupational safety have been created in the organisation, how clear a view is shared by the organisation, supervisor and employee, and how much dialogue, trust and mutual understanding exists between the supervisor and the employee. A decisive role is played by the supervisor's support, trust and genuine interest in the work and its development. Involvement in decision-making regarding one's own job description, working hours and work development is also important. Within the daily work, it is necessary to build structures enabling reflection, provision and reception of feedback, debriefing after challenging or stressful situations, maintenance of well-being and coping, development of communality at work, peer support, networking and development of work. In addition, it is important to carefully prepare a safety plan, risk assessment in various operating environments, plan for crisis situations and instructions on how to seek occupational health care or other support services for employees.

Employees must commit themselves to the organisation's goals, strategies, structures and practices and bring up any development targets constructively. Both the employee and the supervisor must pay attention to personal coping as well as that of the work partner or team, being able to bring up any concerns about their colleague's or their own coping at an early stage, after which it is the supervisor's

duty to start the processes necessary to survey the challenges in coping and support coping.

Occupational guidance should occur regularly in outreach youth work, not only when a situation escalates into a crisis or when challenges in coping are observed. The supervisor is responsible for organising occupational guidance. Occupational guidance may process and develop matters relating to coping at work, delimiting the work, job descriptions and work culture as well as share work with others.

Occupational safety must be a particular priority during fieldwork, home visits and meetings alone with young persons. There must be clear instructions and plans for meeting aggressive young people as well as surprising, dangerous situations. Occupational safety may be promoted by working in pairs, selecting safe meeting places, planning safe spaces and using various tools (e.g. mobile phones, applications and safety systems).

Outreach youth workers should familiarise themselves with the labour legislation ([Working Hours Act](#), [Employment Contracts Act](#)) and their own collective agreement (such as the [Municipal General Collective Agreement](#) [in Finnish], [Collective Agreement for the Private Social Services Sector](#), [Collective Agreement for AVAINTA](#) [in Finnish] and [Collective Agreement for Social Organisations](#) [in Finnish]).

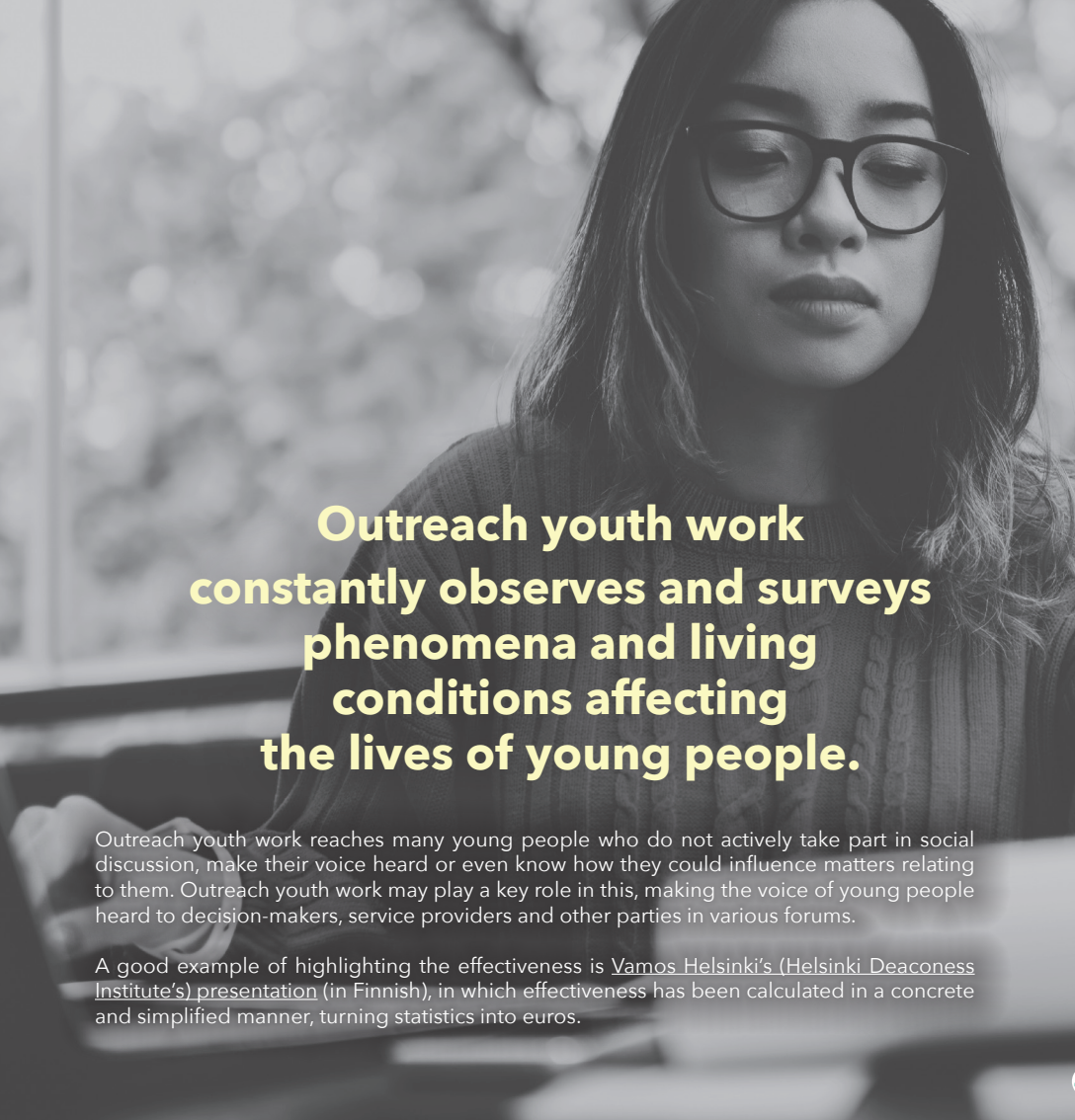
8.

PRODUCING INFORMATION AND EXERTING INFLUENCE

UTILIZING THE COLLECTED INFORMATION

Outreach youth work supported by state aid from the Ministry of Education and Culture produces local, regional and national statistics (PAR system) on young people who have participated in outreach youth work services. The statistics are compiled on the [Finnish youth work statistics](#) website, where they are available to all. In addition, outreach youth work collects information and key figures about the quality and effectiveness of the activities, using tools like the [Sovari social strengthening indicator](#) (in Finnish), feedback surveys, interviews and young people's stories. Outreach youth work constantly observes and surveys local (and national) phenomena and living conditions affecting the lives of young people and is able to relay the information collected and understanding gained in the work.

The information collected can be utilised in developing the work, highlighting the effectiveness of the work, social engagement as well as local, regional and national development of young people's living conditions. The supervisor plays a key role in utilising the information and exerting influence. The supervisor's duty is to relay the information produced by the employees both in the organisation and more extensively in the municipality.



**Outreach youth work
constantly observes and surveys
phenomena and living
conditions affecting
the lives of young people.**

Outreach youth work reaches many young people who do not actively take part in social discussion, make their voice heard or even know how they could influence matters relating to them. Outreach youth work may play a key role in this, making the voice of young people heard to decision-makers, service providers and other parties in various forums.

A good example of highlighting the effectiveness is [Vamos Helsinki's \(Helsinki Deaconess Institute's\) presentation](#) (in Finnish), in which effectiveness has been calculated in a concrete and simplified manner, turning statistics into euros.

PLANNED COMMUNICATION

Outreach youth work is a fairly new form of work in its current form, and, in order to reach young people even better, this work must be made known among young people, partners and municipal residents alike. Making the work known, talking about it and exerting influence to promote it are duties of not only outreach youth workers but also their supervisors and organisations. Communications should be carried out systematically in order to reach key parties as efficiently as possible.

A good way of increasing awareness of the work is active presence and engagement in collaborative networks. Making the faces of outreach youth workers and the work known to young people and performing the work with high quality increases young people's awareness of and trust in outreach youth work. Presence in young people's leisure environments (streets, shopping centres, events, etc.), schools and educational institutes (info sessions, parents' meetings, fieldwork, etc.) and contacting young people even before they need support lowers the threshold for them to contact the service when needed. Other useful tools include presence in social media, bulletins to partners, social media campaigns, advertisements, brochures and visibility at schools, educational institutes, youth centres

and other places where young people go as well as participation in various events.

Marketing and communications should be systematically targeted at municipal decision-makers, partners and young people, using different communications channels and message contents for each group. Local (and national) media, social media and networks should be utilised in the communications. In addition, marketing is still necessary as part of the daily work in a wide variety of situations.



The key messages of communications are the task and role of outreach youth work and how the service can be accessed. In addition, it is important to make the effectiveness and results of the work visible to municipal decision-makers in particular. In highlighting the effectiveness, it is a good idea to utilise information and statistics produced through PAREnt and the Sovari indicator as well as young people's own stories. In some places, it may be wise to carry out communications and marketing together with a more extensive area, so that every municipality and every employee need not do everything by themselves from the beginning to the end. In this, it is a good idea to utilise outreach youth work's peer networks, regional coordination and sharing good practices.

Communications, providing information about the work and its results and explaining the form of work to municipal decision-makers in particular is important not only for safeguarding the resources of outreach youth work but also for developing the municipality's services for young people. Outreach youth work may highlight the experiences of young people belonging to its target group as well as service deficiencies they have observed, which might otherwise go unnoticed.

9.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

10.

LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT

RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership

The leadership of outreach youth work requires both close involvement in the daily work and allowing some space for independent work. The organisation and management must determine the local goals, limits and opportunities of the work together with outreach youth workers, be interested in and aware of outreach youth work, support the daily work and participate in exerting influence in their own forums. The organisation and management must know the nature and results of outreach youth work and be able to highlight these in the municipality.

Outreach youth work supervisor's role

- Ensures the physical prerequisites for outreach youth work (office space, telephones, transport opportunities, PARent documentation system and operational appropriation)
- Makes it possible to work in pairs
- The supervisor must be clearly authorised to make administrative and professional decisions regarding outreach youth work
- Discusses and decides together with outreach youth workers on the current target group, prioritisation and division of the work
- Creates a clear framework towards other partners in cooperation

- Ensures that outreach youth workers do not perform the work of other authorities or sectors
- Is sufficiently involved in daily outreach youth work
- Provides sufficient guidance and time for reflection (locally and regionally) and takes part in the reflection with outreach youth workers
- Ensures that outreach youth workers are provided with sufficient occupational guidance, their job description is defined and the demands of their work are assessed, taking into account the working conditions, target group and delimiting of the work youth workers on participation in collaborative networks
- Agrees together with outreach youth workers on participation in collaborative networks
- Provides outreach youth workers with prerequisites for working flexibly, allowing enough time for the various processes involved and independent work
- Provides the municipal administration and partners with information collected by outreach youth work about young people, their living conditions, services and arenas

- Ensures that the organisation carrying out outreach youth work informs the party responsible for outreach youth work in the municipality of the experiences, conclusions and proposals relating to the work.

Outreach youth work benefits from creating peer networks both regionally and nationally. One structure that enables peer support is regional coordination, based on which it is also possible to build national coordination and a national peer network for outreach youth work. These already exist in some parts of the country. Here, we can learn from the equivalent coordination system for workshop activities. Tight peer networks enable making the voice of outreach youth work heard more extensively than locally, joint development of the work, sharing of good practices and know-how as well as making outreach youth work nationally consistent. National networking can be promoted in the centre of excellence for social strengthening, for example.



Peer networks and support

EXAMPLE: Regional coordination for Southwest, Western and Inland Finland:

1. The task of the outreach youth work coordination group is to support outreach youth workers in the area in defining their job description and positioning within the field of services in their municipality and in developing occupational safety.

2. The coordination group and regional coordinators support outreach youth workers in the area, particularly new workers. Outreach youth workers can turn to the regional coordinator when they have questions about outreach youth work in their municipality. The coordinator ensures that outreach youth workers get peer support when they need it.

3. The coordinators relay information from the outreach youth workers to the coordination group and on to the ministry, and also from the ministry and regional administration to municipalities, supervisors and outreach youth workers. Regional differences are brought up and good practices shared in the coordination group and at regional meetings.

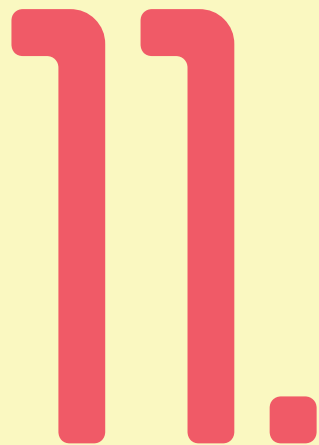
4. The coordination group is responsible for the professional development of outreach youth work – establishing ethical principles and planning up-to-date training, including organising regional outreach youth work days.

Regional coordinator - Outreach youth worker:

- 1.** Maintaining contact information in the area
- 2.** Organising regional meetings for outreach youth workers – these also provide peer support
- 3.** Communication with the regional administration and coordination group
- 4.** Communication with the network of supervisors
- 5.** Shared processing of topical issues in the area – professional and ethical development of the work
- 6.** Supporting new outreach youth workers in the area – sharing good practices

In addition to regional coordination and peer support, outreach youth workers may benefit from networking with other outreach youth workers who act in other operating environments in similar municipalities. Contacts with outreach youth workers from various areas can be made during national and regional outreach youth work days, in the Facebook group for outreach youth work or in training and meetings organised for outreach youth workers. The centre of excellence for social strengthening, Regional State Administrative Agencies and supervisors can promote the establishment of contacts and enable peer networking and exchange of ideas both more extensively and regarding the development of a certain sub-area.





MULTI- PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

IMPORTANCE OF THE NETWORK

Outreach youth work succeeds best in cooperation with other actors. The role of outreach youth work is to be “on the same side of the table” as the young people and ensure that they are heard and retain their agency in decisions and processes relating to their own lives. Outreach youth workers must know the local actors and services for young people, make their own work known among the other actors and retain their own role as representatives of youth work. In outreach youth work, drawing a line between your own tasks and those of other professionals is highly important. Outreach youth workers must not start doing the work of other professionals or compensating for deficiencies in other services. When working with individuals, the line is sometimes hard to discern when dealing with themes of substance abuse and mental health work or needs of social work, for example, but you must still be able to stick to it. The role of outreach youth workers in networks is not only to guide the young people to the services they need and reach people left out of or leaving other services, but also to support the young

Outreach youth workers must know the local actors and services.

people and share information about current issues relating to their living conditions.

Outreach youth workers must know the service system for young people and the local actors, be able to survey and contact the parties that are essential from the viewpoint of young people's needs and promote closer cooperation with these parties. However, this must not be the responsibility of the municipality's outreach youth worker alone, but other actors, organisations and supervisors must also assume responsibility for sealing the gaps in the service system and intensifying the cooperation. The outreach youth work supervisor must ensure that the employees have sufficient capabilities, resources and authorisations to promote the creation and development of support networks for young people through their work.

There may be great regional differences in the cooperation with other actors, since the needs, actors and operating cultures vary. It is important to find operating methods that work locally and strengthen and develop these. The regional coordinator may also compile these good practices regionally. Network cooperation is also challenged by the changing needs of young people and varying focus on target groups. It is important that outreach youth work participates in local work groups essential for it, establishes and maintains relationships with

other partners important in terms of young people and ensures that they have up-to-date information about outreach youth work in the municipality. Supervisors also play an important role in building and maintaining network cooperation – they are often involved in different municipal forums than the employees, so they can exert influence to contribute to the networking of outreach youth workers with employees from various sectors.

Outreach youth work's cooperation with other professionals and authorities is bi-directional – young people are guided in both directions, and practices relating to guidance, flow of information, structures and development must be created together with the partners in cooperation. The interfaces of services, guidance, arm-in-arm support and division of work must also be discussed together so that the guidance works as smoothly as possible from the young person's perspective.

Cooperation with comprehensive schools usually concentrates on reaching young people left without a study place after basic education and supporting them in cooperation with the guidance counsellor. With upper-secondary institutes, the focus is usually on reaching and supporting young people who are considering discontinuation of studies or have already done it.



With the Defence Forces and the Centre for Non-Military Service, the purpose of the cooperation is to reach and support young people who have been exempted from service because of lack of fitness or have discontinued their service. When necessary, outreach youth work also helps young people seek studies or military or non-military service. With other authorities and services for young people, the cooperation varies according to the young people's needs. For example, outreach youth work helps young people seek the services or activities of other actors or handle their matters with authorities, or possibly carries out the activities in collaboration with the other actors.



Good practices of network cooperation:

Regular communication and structures for discussing current issues (e.g. regular meetings).

Local, regional and national networks of outreach youth workers – it is a good idea to collaborate with colleagues from not only the surrounding area but also other municipalities and cities of the same size or with similar operating environments or cultures. Networking contributes to forming a shared understanding, sharing good practices and building a stronger professional identity. Peer networks and meetings can also be built nationally (e.g. centre of excellence for social strengthening and Regional State Administrative Agencies).

Outreach youth work could not succeed without cooperation with other actors.

Most common partners and networks:

Municipality's youth work

Schools and educational institutes

Finnish Defence Forces

Centre for Non-Military Service

Municipality's social and health services, mental health and substance abuse services, adult social work, child welfare, disability services, housing services, debt counselling, cultural services, sports and exercise services, youth services, etc.

One-Stop Guidance Centre

Parish

Youth Workshops

Youth centres

Other outreach youth workers

– locally, regionally and nationally (peer networks)

Local organisations – for example, support organisations for minority groups, youth organisations, social and health organisations, substance abuse and mental health organisations as well as other organisations offering services, activities or support for young people

TE Services

Social Insurance Institution of Finland

Criminal Sanctions Agency

MEASURING OUTREACH YOUTH WORK

Measuring outreach youth work and assessing its effectiveness is challenging, since it is hard to measure preventive meeting work numerically and indicate clear cause-and-effect relationships. For this reason, it is important to produce diverse, both statistical and qualitative, information based on young people's experiences and stories. By combining these pieces of information, we can better understand the effects of the work on young people's well-being.

Outreach youth work has access to a national, free-of-charge client data and statistical system ([PAR system](#), in Finnish), which is used to collect consistent statistical data nationally from youth workshops (PARTy) and outreach youth work (PARent). These statistics make the activities visible at the local level and nationally, enabling the comparison of anonymous statistical key figures. The customer relationship systems of the PAR systems are intended for internal and external monitoring of the activities of organisations providing outreach youth work. The statistics are collected from PARTy, PARent and other systems to the shared PARKki database three times a year. The users and partner organisations always receive a separate notice on this, providing the instructions and schedules for submitting the statistics.

The national statistics are delivered to the Ministry of Education and Culture for funding monitoring, research use, decision-making, etc.

The statistics are visualised on the Regional State Administrative Agency's [Finnish youth work statistics](#) website. Work communities carrying out outreach youth work must ensure that the PAR systems have been provided with up-to-date contact information for communications, software updates and the [entit.fi](#) website.

The PARent system is a daily tool that not only produces statistical data required by the Ministry of Education and Culture but also enables the secure documentation of the individual processes of young people. Information must be recorded in the system as soon as possible after meetings so that the system is always up to date. The system enables monitoring the young person's path and making your own notes to support the work. The statistical data can be utilised in developing the activities and form of work, highlighting the effectiveness of the work as well as strengthening the inclusion and agency of young people regionally and nationally.

In addition to statistical data, it is a good idea to make use of local and qualitative information collected through surveys, information produced by the Sovari indicator as well as young people's feedback and stories. The Sovari indicator is based on an anonymous online survey for young people's self-assessment. Responding to Sovari contributes to strengthening the inclusion of young people. In the [Sovari](#)

survey, young people assess their experiences of social strengthening in five sub-areas of outreach youth work: self-knowledge, social skills, management of daily activities, study and working life skills as well as life management and target-orientation. In addition, the young people assess how well the following aspects of the service have been realised: establishing contact with outreach youth work, being heard, trust and receiving support. In Sovari's result summaries, the results of each outreach youth work organisation are compared with the national results. This comparison data can be utilised in developing the activities with the focus on young people. Information collected by various means also provides direction for more extensive development of services for young people. This is why it is important to highlight the information collected by outreach youth work in municipalities.

Statistics and surveys provide information about, for example, the number of young people belonging to the target group, regional factors, guidance of young people and viability of multi-professional cooperation. Qualitative information provides an idea of, for example, the viability of the methods, smoothness of

12.

ASSESSMENT, QUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND REPORTING

guidance, young people's experiences of social strengthening as well as needs for competence development. Collecting young people's experiences, statistical data and outreach youth workers' own experiences also benefits the outreach youth work organisation and municipality – the information can be used to develop the structures of management and activities and create new good practices to make daily life smoother.

Data collection methods:

- PARent or other client data and statistical system
- Sovari indicator
- Annual national surveys
- Young people's feedback and local surveys for young people
- Local statistics and indicators – parallel indicators developed on the basis of local needs if the national statistics required for reporting are not sufficient
- Monthly monitoring of the number of young people

Useful statistics and studies:

- Number of young people outside working life and education in the municipality
- Demographic structure of the municipality – e.g. total number of young people in the target group, number of young people in various linguistic and cultural minorities
- Youth Barometer
- School Health Survey
- Finnish youth work statistics (Nuorisotilastot.fi)
- Various well-being indexes – e.g. division of well-being by residential area

Good practices:

- Agreeing on recording practices within the outreach youth work team – internally comparable, up-to-date information
- Highlighting savings for society and municipality with the help of statistics ([Vamos model](#), in Finnish)
- Regularly compiling the collected information for the supervisor, who relays it to the municipality's decision-making structures

In developing the work, it is important not only to utilise the information collected but also to update expertise and enable regular reflection on the work (training and occupational guidance). In addition, regional and national collaboration with other outreach youth workers provides perspective, new ideas and good practices for your work.

Reading tip:

Bamming, Ruth 2017: [Etsivä nuorisotyö 2016 – Valtakunnallisen etsivän nuorisotyön kyselyn tulokset \(Outreach youth work 2016 – Results of the national outreach youth work survey\)](#), Opetus- ja kulttuuritoimen vastuualue 31/2017, Publications of the Regional State Administrative Agency.

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Information collected also provides direction for more extensive development.

13.

FOR PARTNERS

OUTREACH YOUTH WORK AS A PARTNER

Outreach youth work is stipulated in sections 10–12 of the Youth Act (1285/2016).

The mission of outreach youth work is to reach young people in need of assistance and provide access to services and other support designed to promote their growth, independence, social inclusion and life management skills as well as to improve access to education and facilitate entry into the labour market. Outreach youth work is based on voluntary participation by and cooperation with the young person involved. Outreach youth work shall primarily be initiated in response to the information provided by the young person him- or herself or his or her own assessment of the need for support. In addition, outreach youth work may be initiated in response to information provided by other authorities.

Regardless of non-disclosure provisions, information identifying the young person involved and his or her contact details shall be disclosed to the young person's home municipality for outreach youth work purposes as follows:

- 1.** An education provider shall disclose information on a young person who has completed his or her basic education but who is not pursuing any studies beyond the completed basic education;
- 2.** An education provider shall disclose information on a young person who ceases to participate in vocational education or general upper secondary education;
- 3.** The Defence Forces and the Centre for Non-Military Service shall disclose information on a young person who is exempted from military or non-military service because of lack of fitness or who decides not to complete military or non-military service.

The responsibility of the reporting party for supporting and reaching the young person as required in their field of work does not end when the party files the report to outreach youth work as specified in the Youth Act. Outreach youth work is obliged to try to reach all young people reported for outreach youth work. The education or training provider, Defence Forces and the Centre for Non-Military Service may also decide not to disclose information on the young person, if they – considering the information available and the young person's situation and his or her need for support in the light of all the relevant circumstances – determine that he or she is not in need of services and other support.

Additionally, an authority other than an authority defined above or the Social Insurance Institution of Finland Kela may, regardless of non-disclosure provisions, disclose information identifying the young person involved and his or her contact details, if they – considering the information available and the young person's situation and his or her need for support in the light of all the relevant circumstances – determine that the young person is in need of immediate support in order to access the services and other support. If a registered association, foundation or other organisation offering free-time activities determine that a young person is in need of outreach youth services, they may, subject to the express consent of the young person and the consent of the guardian of a minor young person, disclose information identifying the young person and his or her contact details for outreach youth work purposes. Those disclosing information shall, in advance and using an appropriate means of communication, notify the young person and the guardian of a minor young person that information on the young person may be disclosed for outreach youth work purposes. If the party required to disclose information has contacted an authority comparable to social services (child welfare report, preliminary child welfare report or contacting social welfare to request assessment of the need for support), no notification needs to be filed with outreach youth work services based on the same information.

The report for outreach youth work may be submitted by telephone, e-mail or in writing. The contact information for outreach youth work in municipalities can be found on the municipalities' websites and nationally on the [entti.fi](#) website. In addition, the report can be submitted through the [Tajua Mut!](#) (Get Me!) operating model or [Välittäminen koodi](#) (Code of caring) model in municipalities where these systems are used. Young people may also personally inform outreach youth work of their need for support either through these systems or by contacting the municipality's outreach youth workers directly. Outreach youth work is voluntary for the young people, so they do not need to accept the service. Outreach youth work is primarily preventive guidance, so the cooperation should be started as early as possible - when the young person has not disappeared yet.

When to contact outreach youth work?

- When an authority or actor, based on available information gained in its work, assesses that the young person is in need of support and guidance that cannot be directly defined as belonging to the duties of their own field or some other actor or sector
- When the young person is not yet ready to start using the required service independently
- When the young person is not committed to the service or activities in which they are currently involved and it has been assessed that there is a risk of their falling or having already fallen out side the service
- When the young person cannot be contacted.



14.

REGIONAL SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THE ORGANISATIONS' OWN OPERATING METHODS

ADAPTIVE YOUTH WORK

Outreach youth work is, and must be, highly different in different places. Outreach youth work starts from young people's local, current needs, regional special characteristics and opportunities. For this reason, it is important to make regular surveys, get to know young people's environments and challenges locally and regionally as well as plan the activities on their basis. The induction must also include regional information in order for the outreach youth worker to be able to work efficiently.

The regional part of the induction may include the following, for instance:

Results of the latest survey – Total number of young people in the target group, number of young people outside education and working life, young people's environments, largest language minorities as well as observations about changes in young people's growth and living conditions and current phenomena > What do we need to know about the operating environment and target group?

Young people's direction and networks

– Where do young people come to outreach youth work from and where are they directed? How much resources are taken up by reaching the young people reported by authorities or other actors and maintaining the network cooperation; key partners > Who are we working with, what are we doing and why?

Resources and forms of work – How much resources are spent on, for example, fieldwork, network cooperation, individual guidance and small group activities? > How much of each are we doing and why?

Own organisation – Administration, operating methods, decision-making, staff benefits, systems, occupational well-being, occupational health care and other organisational structures > What do we need to know about our own organisation?

Local actors and services for young people

– Local special characteristics of the service system for young people; what services are offered to young people and what is their availability > What do we need to know about other actors and services?

Regional special characteristics – Local culture, history of outreach youth work, opportunities for young people and prospects for the future > What particular factors do we need to take into account from the local perspective as regards the operating environments, methods and ways of doing things?

OUTREACH
YOUTH WORK

[Youth Act 2017](#)

[Ministry of Education and Culture](#)
[- Youth](#)

[PAR client data and](#)
[statistical system](#)

[Finnish youth work statistics](#)
[- Outreach youth work](#)

[Youth Guarantee](#)

[Tietoa Nuorista](#)
[- State Youth Council](#)

[entit.fi](#)
[- Contact information for](#)
[outreach youth work](#)

[Facebook group for](#)
[outreach youth work](#)

[Ministry of Education and Culture](#)
[- Publications](#)

["Etsivän nuorisotyön kehittämisen](#)
[tuki"](#) ("Support for outreach youth
work development") project (blog)

[Tajua Mut!](#)

[Välittämisen koodi](#)

[Riksförbundet för fältarbete](#)

["Koordinaatit nuorten tieto- ja neuvon-](#)
[tatyöhön"](#) ("Coordinates for providing
young people with information and
guidance")

[Koordinaatti](#)

[Finnish youth centres](#)

[Nuotta coaching](#)

[Valtakunnallinen Työpajayhdistys](#)
[\(TPY\) - National Workshop](#)
[Association \(NWA\)](#)

[Amet ry](#)

[Nuorten Elämä](#)

["Kuntouttavan työtoiminnan](#)
[käsikirja"](#) ("Handbook for
rehabilitative work activities")

[National Institute for](#)
[Health and Welfare](#)

15.

USEFUL LINKS

16.

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and Culture



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