

HEAD OF SERVICE REPORT

Executive Summary

- 1.0 This report presents to the Committee an overview of the work undertaken by the Youth & Play Service during the period September - December 2006. The Committee is asked to note this report.

Service Developments

- 2.0 Since our last meeting the following people have moved into other post or have left the Service. Debbie Dawson has been appointed as an Area Team Leader for the new Children & Young People's Department. This appointment is for 50% of her time and she will remain as a Head of Team for Wallasey/ Deeside for the other 50 %. Mark Newman has been appointed as Head of Team for Wallasey / Deeside to cover for Debbie Dawson. In September, Linda Smith retired from her post as Housing Worker in Response. John Duffy has retired on the grounds of ill health. John had been with the Service as both a volunteer and paid staff for over 30 years and Linda had been with the Service for approximately 26 years. I wish them well for the future.

Wirral Outreach Team

3.0 Wirral Outreach Team

- 3.1 The Wirral Outreach Team has worked with young people in locations throughout the borough, developing new contacts, often in new locations. The neighbourhood based outreach projects continue to have a positive impact on the lives of young people through a wide spectrum of youth work practice, addressing national and local priorities.
- 3.2 The following examples illustrate the diverse range of opportunities that have been available to young people through their contact with outreach youth workers. Young people from the Wallasey Young People's Project, together with those from Poland, Estonia and Finland, attended a conference in Jihlava in the Czech Republic; in conjunction with Brook, WYPP have organised sexual health sessions for an 18 plus group; in partnership with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, young people from Deeside Young People's Project have embarked on a 26 week marine rescue course.
- 3.3 During the school holidays, young people have enjoyed a varied programme of activities including bowling, ice-skating, windsurfing, mountain biking, rock climbing and sailing, as well as trips to Alton Towers and to Manley Mere. Support was given

to a Dance Night in Victoria Park, a Tranmere Alliance initiative, suggested by young people as an alternative to down town club going. As part of a programme of diversionary activities aimed at young people who sometimes engage in anti social behaviour, the Kontakta Bus was sited in Birkenhead Park and used as point of contact for the delivery of activities and structured issue based sessions.

- 3.4 The Wirral Outreach Team has organised some successful Wirral wide events. The annual Sand Sculpture Competition had an international flavour, with young people visiting Wirral as part of an International Exchange Group competing for the first time. In October, at half term, over 130 young people took part in a football tournament held at the Soccer Dome. A girls' team, a team of young people with disabilities, teams from youth clubs and from street groups made up the entries.
- 3.5 A considerable amount of work is done on a Friday night when several sports initiatives have been developed. The North End Young People's Project is working in partnership with Claughton Community Association on sports taster sessions at the all weather pitch at Birkenhead Rugby Club. South Wirral Young People's Project, together with the Police, are running a football session at the Oval. At West Kirby, the Deeside Young People's Project encourages and supports young people to attend the youth sports night at the Concourse.
- 3.6 Also on a Friday night, the youth workers focus on making young people aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. This is done on an informal basis on the streets, sometimes in partnership with colleagues from Response, and in a more formal workshop setting. The theme of harm reduction work is carried on throughout the week. Young men from Eastham have been looking at drug and alcohol misuse within the context of promoting a healthy lifestyle. They have identified those issues on which they would like advice and this has been developed into weekly awareness workshops. The Fender Youth Action Project has worked with young women who are at risk from alcohol abuse and smoking.
- 3.7 The Wirral Outreach Team and in particular, the Noctorum Young People's Project and the Birkenhead Youth Action Project has contributed to combating race hate by supporting families experiencing race hate. Racist language is challenged when encountered. The Birkenhead Youth Action Project's Harmony Project is aimed at bringing Muslim and non-Muslim young people from the Woodlands area together via the medium of sport.
- 3.8 Young people have been supported to make a positive contribution in a number of ways. In addition to supporting young people's attendance at Youth Forums, young people have been encouraged to express their views to decision makers, e.g. some from Newton participated in training for elected members. The development of parks and open spaces has provided another opportunity for the positive involvement of young people in the community.
- 3.9 In its contribution to the community safety agenda, the Wirral Outreach Team, has not only undertaken face to face work with young people, but has also played an active role in multi agency problem solving groups. The Wirral Outreach Team's proposals for information sharing and for identifying the most appropriate agency to work with specific individual young people have been adopted and implemented.

The Wirral Outreach Team has attended community meetings called to address concerns about anti social behaviour in Tranmere, Rock Ferry and Birkenhead. There has been positive feedback from the community and other agencies about the Team's involvement and the youth work undertaken.

Birkenhead and Bebington Area Team

- 4.0 Many clubs in the area have been busy this Autumn . with many of the young people achieving both Recorded and Accredited Outcomes. Recruitment remains an issue across the board, but a number of newly appointed staff are awaiting clearance procedures.
- 4.1 **Callister Youth Club** - ran a successful summer programme. A number of short in house courses ran over this period including, sign language, drugs and alcohol awareness, healthy eating and sexual health. This unit also hosted the international exchange group from Hong Kong, which allowed for a good deal of work to focus on cultural awareness.
- 4.2 **Pensby Youth Club** - has been through a difficult time recently with some challenging behaviour from a group of older young people, which led to the club being closed for a short while. Financial investment has given Pensby new equipment and a new staff team have been working in the area in an outreach capacity. This approach has proved successful and from a slow start the numbers in the club are building, with 20 plus young people now attending on a regular basis. The new membership is made up of young people at the lower end of the age range who are enthusiastic to take part in activities. A grant of £2,000 has been awarded to the club from the Community Safety Team. Young people in this unit are now planning their winter programme.
- 4.3 **Bromborough Youth Club** – have recently been on a residential which was planned by the young people and focussed on the issue of 'bullying'. The group all received a recorded outcome for their efforts. Friday nights have traditionally been the club night for young people with disabilities. However, many of this group are now over the age of 25 years, hence over the age range for the Youth Service, therefore, another venue has been found for this adult group. The young people from the club organised a farewell party to say their goodbyes, they baked cakes and did the catering themselves which was well received.
- 4.4 **Charing Cross Youth Club** - took part in the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs (MAYC) 'Break out 'event which was a successful residential weekend experience. Six young people achieved the 100 hours Millennium Volunteer Award, as the unit continues to support volunteering and community service. Project work has been carried out on issues of health and well-being, rights and responsibilities, relationships, community awareness, music and creative arts, fitness and sport and anti bullying. The recent Halloween party was attended by 58 members.

Wallasey and Deeside Area Team

- 5.0 Due to low numbers and older members exiting provision, a number of units are in the process of recruiting new members who are 13 this year. Despite this, much

good practise is still evident throughout the area. Below a few youth clubs are highlighted to record their good practise during the previous quarter.

- 5.1 **Fender Youth Club** – youth workers on the Woodchurch Estate are currently dealing with low staffing issues, despite this, they are working with older members in the youth club and young people on outreach. Hoole Road shops are an issue on the estate for groups of young people congregating in and around the bookmakers. Following contact with the outreach staff this group are now accessing football sessions at the sports centre and youth club provision.
- 5.2 The club is working with an older group of young people aged 18 plus who are not engaged in employment or training. To best serve the needs of this group, a partnership has been developed between the youth club, Village Youth Club and the Neighbourhood Management Outreach Worker. Through this partnership the club will open on a Wednesday afternoon with Raleigh International offering training. Visits from Connexions and outdoor activities will also be on the Wednesday afternoon programme.
- 5.3 **Allandale Youth Centre** - the club is still without a manager, but despite this, the staff are offering club based and outreach work in the neighbourhood. The club is low on numbers and at present the young people are working to promote the youth club. Young people are due to start a project for World Aids Day and are taking part in the Youth Federation Postal quiz.
- 5.4 **Leasowe Youth Club** - The newly appointed Neighbourhood Worker has now been in post for 2 months. Since her appointment the membership of the youth club has risen to 30-40 young people attending on a regular basis. The members have recently applied for funding to refurbish the Youth House for the outreach and project work. A couple of weeks ago a group of young men planned and ran a fundraising rave/disco for 50 young people; the event was a huge success. Some young women are working towards a dance competition, choreographing their own routine and charging a nominal sum for sessions to help pay for costumes. Recently, the young people were successful in a football tournament taking first and runner up places.

Young People's Participation

6.0. Attendance at the last round of Youth Forum was high with over 50 young people attending the Birkenhead Forum arrangements are being made to hold the next round of Youth Forums in January. There are three adult community forums held in each area each year and the youth forums will now be held with the same frequency .ie January, May and September. This will not prevent local arrangements for informal meetings in the Autumn. There are separate reports on the Youth Parliament and the Youth opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund.

Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts

7.0 Wirral Youth Theatre / Youth Arts

- 7.0 Work with schools - Dance work in Wirral schools continues to involve peer educators in co facilitating workshops. WYT/Youth Arts has been instrumental in the establishment of a cross agency Wirral Youth Dance Forum in partnership with School Sport Advisors. A drama-based project has just finished with Wallasey Extended School, which focused on drugs education and awareness. Regular

drama based workshops have been taking place with older pupils from Meadowside and Foxfield Schools - focusing on building confidence and assertiveness towards integration into a major production in 2008 as part of Liverpool Capital of Culture Celebrations.

- 7.1 BTEC in Peer Education – the 13 young people who successfully completed this first course, were presented with their certificates by the Deputy Mayor at a celebratory event in November. The qualification is equivalent to four GCSEs and provides an excellent progression route for older young people.
- 7.2 Connexions PAYP - A range of arts activities have been available during holiday periods for young people assessed to be 'at risk' of offending. To date two ARTZONE schemes have run involving around twenty-five young people in a range of multi media activities.
- 7.3 'Misunderstood' Connexions DVD - Connexions have commissioned WYT/Youth Arts to produce a DVD and resource pack looking at issues between police and young people. This project will involve working with up to twenty 'at risk' young people currently in contact with Connexions Personal Advisors.
- 7.4 Reducing Risk Taking Behaviour commissioned by Brook - An interactive drama and workshop package called 'Girl's Night Out' was devised, performed and facilitated by a group of peer educators which explored risk taking behaviours relating to drugs, alcohol and sexual behaviour.
- 7.5 'My Ideal Foster Family' Training DVD - Commissioned by Social Services, 'My Ideal Foster Family' - a follow up training DVD to 'My Ideal Social Worker' - was launched in September. 'My Ideal Foster Family' will also be a tool for training potential Foster Carers from a young person's perspective.
- 7.6 'Sound Steps' Music Project - In 2006/07 funding was received from Youth Music to help develop participatory music with particularly harder to reach young people. Confirmation has just been received for a follow-up funding application of £30,000, enabling continuation of this work for another eighteen months. *Sound Steps Stage Two* will focus on developing a music download website for young Wirral talent, establishing two trainee music worker posts and establishing a purpose built music space for young people.

Outdoor Education/Duke of Edinburgh's Award

- 8.0 2006 is the 50th anniversary of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the UK. As an operating authority for the Award, Wirral Youth and Play Service has been actively involved in celebrating past achievements and exploring ways in which we can deliver the award in the future.
- 8.1 Several youth organizations and schools have recently enrolled as local Award Operating Units to enable them to deliver elements of the scheme to the young people they engage with. In addition we have been particularly keen to work with organizations who offer volunteering opportunities for young people. A notable example is the Wirral Volunteering Network who, through their 5 Wirral based

offices, are now able to accredit and certificate young people in their role as an Award Access Organisation.

8.2 In line with our policy of making the Award available to all young people, the Award Officer is keen to identify and remove the barriers that prevent Wirral young people from participating in the Award. This will involve actively engaging with several groups of clientele including:

- Looked After Children
- Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Financially deprived
- Unmotivated young people
- Young offenders
- Young people not receiving Award support from school.

8.3 This autumn 24 young people from the borough visited St. James's Palace in London to personally receive their Gold Awards from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. In addition 156 bronze and silver participants received their badges and certificates from the Deputy Mayor at Wallasey Town Hall. This particular group included 36 young people who have gained their Awards independently and mainly through the intense cooperation of enthusiastic parent support groups and youth service staff. This model of delivery was piloted in Wirral several years ago and is proving to be a great success.

2007 will see Wirral Operating Authority engaging with and licensing a number of new organizations who we feel, will enhance the delivery of the Award.

Special Needs/International Work

9.0 **Ivy Farm** - Occupancy rates continue to be good right up to Christmas. Bookings are now open for next year with prime dates going fast. The Farm continues to be popular for training and meetings.

9.1 **Senior Member Training** - The new course starts in January 2007 and details/application forms have been distributed. The course runs over 10 weeks and includes a residential weekend.

9.2 **International Work** - An invitation has been received from Bremen, long term partners, for four youth workers to attend a conference in May 2007 entitled "Prevention Work with Young People/Safer Cities". It is intended to also invite a police representative, ESW, Merseytravel Youth Worker and possibly a health worker to the conference.

9.3 There is tentative agreement for a youth exchange with Hong Kong in 2007, provisional talks with Azores for a multi-national exchange and an enquiry from Germany. Recruitment is currently taking place for the next Hong Kong exchange. The presentation/selection evening will be held in January 2007 and is being organised by last year's group, who are also looking at funding for this next exchange.

9.4 **Special Needs Work** - Awareness workshops for young people are in the pipeline for early 2007 as is an equality course for youth workers. The worker continues to

support units working with young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and to be the contact point for advice and enquiries in this area of work.

Response

- 10.0 Response continues to develop positive working relationships with both schools and voluntary agencies. A high number of schools have requested educational workshops which include drug and alcohol education and homelessness. The launch and subsequent press release of our joint working, imaginative, hands-on interactive programme has been very well received in schools. This joint work with Wirral Brook includes 8 zone base workstations whereby groups of up to 100 young people can rotate, learn and have fun. The programme includes relationships, homelessness, alcohol, drugs, problem solving and sexual health.
- 10.1 A new guide for Response has been developed which includes comprehensive information about what the service can offer. This guide is available electronically and is currently being circulated across the authority.
- 10.2 Between July and October 2006, 625 individual young people presented to Response with difficulties, including those young people attending for housing, advice, support and counselling. These young people returned to the agency making a total of 1442 contacts. The Outreach Team have delivered educational workshops and during street work have delivered services to approx 500 young people. This figure is in addition to the 625 who presented to Response.
- 10.3 A number of clients are over the age of 20 years. This client group present with complex, multiple needs and workers are finding it increasingly difficult and disproportionately resource intensive to access other services for these vulnerable adults.

Outreach Work

- 10.4 Cocaine and Steroid use amongst the young people continues to be an area of concern. Steroid use is prevalent in some young people we are working with. Staff have attended a course on steroid use and personal safety issues are discussed with young people on the streets. Two young males have received information and advice on steroid use and personal safety. Referrals have been made into the Lodge at St. Catherine's hospital and another male has been referred to the Anti-social behaviour team, following a discussion regarding a forthcoming Court hearing.
- 10.5 Staff are meeting with young people who congregate by the Youth Shelter @ The Guinea Gap Baths. Female members of the group tend to meet regularly on a Friday evening and are engaged in risk taking behaviour. We aim to work in partnership with the local neighbourhood worker in the area, engage with the group and deliver informal drug, alcohol and personal safety workshops on the streets or on the Kontactabus.
- 10.6 There has been a significant decrease in the numbers of young people congregating on Borough Road and surrounding areas. The Section 30 (Dispersal Order) is now in place and our team has informed young people the implications of this order. We are still working on a one-to-one basis with some young males in the

area. However, other group members have moved away from the area towards Oxton Village, Carlisle Mews, The Arno Park, Derby, Church and Grange Road and some into Mersey and Victoria Park.

Housing Advice Service

- 10.7 The Housing Advice Service has dealt with 200 Young People from July–October. Of these 18 have been accommodated and 5 have returned home, the remainder of the cases are ongoing. There is at present a lack of available accommodation for young people in Wirral. Most supported projects have a significant waiting list and the direct access hostel is full most of the time. The main causes of this are:
- i. Young people who are ready to move on from temporary supported accommodation are unable to do so due to a lack of independent accommodation.
 - ii. Very positively, Forum Housing Association has improved its eviction policy, however this has reduced the number of young people evicted.

These issues combined contribute to a “bottle neck,” situation for young people, which young people are now experiencing.

- 10.8 The Committee was advised at the last YSAC that Wirral Partnership Homes were planning to remove age restrictions on some properties to help, “ready and able” young people move on from temporary supported accommodation. Between the 5.7.06. and the 31.10.06. Wirral Partnership Homes advertised 589 properties. Of these only 53 of these, i.e. 9% were available for 18 to 25 year olds, compared with 367 properties being available to over 40’s, the majority of these targeted to over 55’s. To date the age bands do not appear to have been lifted yet. Pursuing this will be a priority for the Response Housing Team Manager this quarter.
- 10.9 Discussions have taken place with another social landlord with a view to them freeing up a small number of emergency beds for young people faced with the risk rough sleeping. This is a significant development and we hope that this new partnership arrangement will increase the number of beds available and reduce the number of young people in crisis. Response are periodically faced with some real challenges in dealing with the accommodation of vulnerable young people. Further discussions need to take place with Key Partners to improve the situation.

Counselling Service

- 10.10 Waiting times at the moment are 3-4-weeks. At present the waiting list for counselling is 17 young people during the period July to October 2006 there have been 104 new referrals into the counselling service for young people aged between 13-19. Young people who present over the age of 19 are given details of alternative counselling services or wait longer for an appointment.
- 10.11 Issues into the service remain varied, but include relationship breakdown, problems at school or home, coping alone in accommodation, bereavement, sexuality, abuse and abandonment by family. Young people who have been subjected to bullying in the past, present on a regular basis for counselling. The effect of bullying can be

long lasting and can result in the young person having low self esteem, lack of confidence, suicidal thoughts etc. These feelings can also lead to self injury and difficulty with relationships in later life. The counselling service is offering Biophysical Solutions Therapy (Black Box).

This therapy stimulates the production of substances that form part of the body's natural mechanism for dealing with stress, anxiety and drug addiction.

10.12 Fortunately, young people who access counselling to tackle this issue often find that they can rebuild confidence and self esteem, learn assertiveness skills without aggression and look forward to a better future. The counselling service continues to offer a mediation service to young people, struggling with family relationships.

Financial and Staffing Implications

11.0 There are none arising from this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications

12.0 The Service actively promotes equality and diversity in its delivery.

Human Rights Implications

13.0 The work on participation and youth engagement supports Human Rights.

Community Safety Implications

14.0 The Service seeks to engage young people in positive activities and away from risk taking behaviour.

Planning Implications

15.0 There are none.

Local Member Support Implications

16.0 This report affects all wards.

Recommendation

17.0 The Committee notes the report.

**MAUREEN MCDAID
HEAD YOUTH & PLAY SERVICE**

