

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

HEAD OF SERVICE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report briefs the Committee on developments in the Youth and play service since the last meeting in July. The Committee is asked to note the report.

1. Background

Staff Movements

- 1.1. Maria Modena the Principal Youth Worker at the Fender Youth Action has returned to work from maternity leave. Gary Atkinson has returned to his post following acting up for Maria during her maternity leave.

Debbie McCabe, the Senior Youth Engagement Worker has returned to work after her maternity leave

2. Wirral Outreach Team

- 2.1. The Wirral Youth Service Outreach Team continues to work with young people in public places where they congregate. Through their local knowledge and by developing good working relationships with the young people, the outreach youth workers are able to engage with young people from across the borough, enabling them to access a range of services and take up a variety of opportunities.
- 2.2. Local knowledge accompanied by strong links with various community groups in Tranmere and Rock Ferry has enabled Birkenhead Youth Action Project, in particular, to develop youth work practice in a community context with a focus on developing self esteem, raising aspirations and on young people making a positive contribution to their community.
- 2.3. As well as undertaking work with young people to make them aware of the consequences of annoying and dangerous activities that are sometimes associated with Halloween and Bonfire Night, the Youth Service Outreach Team are supporting multi agency initiatives to make these events enjoyable for all sections of the community.
- 2.4. The Wirral Youth Service Outreach Team delivered a range of activities for young people during the school holidays. The 5-aside competition at the Soccer Dome in August attracted 75 participants drawn from clubs and projects from through out Wirral. This football competition has become a regular school holiday activity.
- 2.5. Young people from Noctorum Young People's Project, Deeside Young People's Project, the North End Young People's Project, Birkenhead Youth Action Project, and South Wirral Young People's Project have made successful bids to the Youth Opportunity Fund. These bids included an environmental project, a multi racial activity programme, a young people's newspaper and the production of an alcohol and drug abuse board game.
- 2.6. The young people with whom Deeside Young People's Project worked with to develop Newton Park have won the North West Regional 'BT Seen and Heard Award' and will presented with their award at a ceremony in the autumn. The Prenton Dell Estate, the Overchurch Estate, Pensby and West Kirby are the DYPP's current locations for streetwork and the Kontactabus.

- 2.7. On the Beechwood and Ballantyne Estates, the Fender Youth Action Project has supported initiatives that have come about through the siting of the Community Mobile Police Station in the area.
- 2.8. The Corridor Project has now established itself with young people in the vicinity of Borough Road and is looking to expand the scope of the work with young people.
- 2.9. Wallasey Young People's Project works in many of the parks in Wallasey, encouraging young people to make appropriate use of the facilities. The young people enjoyed the summer park activities organised by WYPP.
- 2.10. The North End Young People's Project work with Birkenhead Park is bringing young people together with the older generation to discuss plans for the park and to participate in the newly formed Birkenhead Park Sports Association. South Wirral Young People's Project is also bringing the generations together at the 'Dig It' Project where 12 young people, at a ceremony attended by their parents, received certificates for working along side Wirral Groundwork and Wirral Partnership Homes.

3. Birkenhead and Bebington Area Team

- 3.1. The Youth Clubs in the Area moved to the quieter season of their operation, as is the case during the summer season the numbers of attendances decline though some units continued to attract good numbers probably as a result of the poor weather.

Many took part in the Service Summer outdoor programme that is always very popular. Maintaining staffing levels and recruitment is an ongoing issue and concerns have been voiced regarding our ability to maintain the Service as we move into the autumn and winter seasons. Integrated working within the new multidisciplinary teams is developing. The withdrawal of off site webmail had resulted in a reduction of Units having an email connection; this has slowed our communications considerably.

Eastham Youth Centre

- 3.2. The Summer has been busy at Eastham Youth Centre with groups enjoying visits to the national Football museum in Preston and Manley Mere. A significant grant has enabled the outdoor area to undergo a radical overhaul and improvement. An all weather rubberized pitch has been laid with new basketball and netball goals. This pitch will be available for use by the local school and community groups.

Bromborough Youth Club

- 3.3. Bromborough Youth Club have organised a number of off site visits during the summer break, Alton towers and Manley Mere in Cheshire, a popular choice, again. The main in- club project has been art and many pictures and designs can be seen decorating the walls of the Clubrooms.

Viking Youth Club

- 3.4. During the Summer months the Youth Federation PAYP holiday project ran from the Viking Centre and was very successful, it particularly benefits some young people within the local neighbourhood who have the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of exciting and absorbing activities.

Three major Projects have taken place within the youth club; members of Viking were invited to a special event at Barnstondale to take part in outdoor activities. While they were there, some of the group videoed the day and have edited it under the tutorage of the staff from Radio Merseyside, to produce a DVD. This was shown at the recent celebration event held in the Club where certificates were presented to many young people. Another important project was the MC/DJ project that is running on one evening a week. This has proved to be a great attraction to a group

of 16+ young people. Finally the girls dance team who won the Youth Federation dance competition earlier in the year were invited to perform at Dance – England, held at the Lowry in Salford.

Cavendish Youth Club

- 3.5. The build improvements at Cavendish are nearing completion and the members are thrilled with the improvements. A computer and fitness suites are part of the new arrangements and the club seems seem set to enjoy an exciting autumn.

4. Wallasey and Deeside Area

Allandale Youth Club

- 4.1. Young people from the Allendale finished in second place at the football competition in the soccer dome on the 7th August. Seven female members took part in this trip which was funded by the Wirral wardens and crewed by the Narrow Boat Trust. The girls enjoyed the 4 days travelling along the various canals and locks. Everyone took a share of the daily chores and mucked in with the opening of the locks. As part of the evaluation, the girls came up with a map route drawn in the shape of the canal and attached photos to it, putting comments along the route, all positive-except for the beds which were not too comfortable. A presentation was organised and each of the girls received a photograph, certificate, letter of achievement from the crew and a small gift (necklace) from the staff .the group demonstrated individual skills and good team work.

Other Present and Future work:

- Halloween party in the club
- Dance Project
- Music project
- Competition being done to design cover of the CD
- Some of the young people are involved in the Seacombe Community Day D-J(ing) and MC(ing) also marshalling the event which is taking place on the 29th September

Fender Youth Club

- 4.2. Response has been involved in Fender providing a number of drug, alcohol and sexual health workshops. These have been very well attended with an average of twelve attending each session. The young people involved in these have been very active in all the sessions have self referred to response as a result.
- 4.3. The Motivate (Raleigh International) and Daytime Drop In Programme is going well, 24 young people have signed up to the programme and most of these have been actively involved in the voluntary and community work, fundraising and personal development sessions planned. Fender is working closely with this programme, as most of the young people involved are our members.
- 4.4. Four more young people have signed up to the V award and are volunteering as Senior members in our Junior club, their hours also count towards the Motivate project.
- 4.5. Members took part in two gardening projects on the estate the first is developing the community garden in Upton Fire Station which the young people are doing for two hours a week. The second was Holy Cross Church which is now taking place on Hoole Road as the Holy Cross site was unsuitable. The young people have developed a commemorative garden for some of the young people who have died over the last couple of years on the estate this is in conjunction with Bean Bag. The project ran over five days and in all, 35 young people were involved as did some people from the community. All young people involved have signed up to the V project.
- 4.6. Fender run a joint summer programme with Upton Village youth project (The BANK) The project is funded by Woodchurch Neighbourhood Management Team and was open every day except a Wednesday from 1-4pm. The programme is called Park Life and is delivered on the field outside

Fender Youth Club. We provided sporting and arts and craft activities. Numbers have been high and membership has increased due to the project.

- 4.7. As part of the summer programme we took 43 young people of mixed ages to Alton Towers for the day, this was a reward for good behaviour over the summer (and was part funded by the police). The day went really well with positive comments from everyone who took part.

As part of the Youth Services Summer Programme 11 young people took part, climbing in Irby Quarry, young people behaved well and enjoyed the morning.

- 4.8. Young people from Fender made a successful application to the Youth opportunity Fund. The money was used to buy some virtual babies for the centre to run a project around teenage pregnancy and relationships. This is a resource that can be used service wide.

Moreton Youth Club

- 4.9. Free runners attended Red Cross training for 1st aid certificate. The club also organised a course covering Safety at Holiday Time: All areas of safety were addressed: sun, water, alcohol, food and personal safety.
- 4.10. Young people have been fund raising for Claire House. John Haddock from Claire House came to the club to be presented with a cheque by the members. He gave a presentation and held a question time with members.
- 4.11. As part of the Health Promoting Units Programme, young people were assessed and achieve the Silver Award for emotional health and well-being. In addition the young people have been involved in planning and creating a meal on a budget. After completing the changing room project which led to the development of a groupwork room into a chill out space, a celebration night was arranged and it included a healthy buffet, for the grand opening. Young people from the club are currently working with the Princes Trust to revamp the coffee bar area.

Leasowe Youth Club

- 4.12. A group of 7 young people attended the sailing trip, organised as part of the Summer Programme. The young people organised a team for the football tournament calling themselves, Wirral Boys. The team played very well and finished as runners up.

As part of the consultation on the proposals for the youth provision in Leasowe, the young people have been involved in deciding what they would like to see operate as a result of the merger between the youth club and the adventure playground. The youth club will be operating from the "Addy" from the 12th September. The Youth Opportunity Fund grant panel awarded the Club £750 which will be part payment for the Body Combat training the young people requested.

Pensby Youth Club

- 4.13. Staff at Pensby have been working with young people who wish to act as Volunteers. The work has involved looking at responsibilities and accreditation. There is a core group interested in signing up and affiliating to the Youth Federation. Young people have been involved in planning and organising sports tournaments and giving prizes in recognition of the achievement by the participants.

Greasby Youth Club

- 4.14. The youth club members are enjoying taking part in the Health Promoting Youth Units Project. As a result, fruit is available in the youth club two nights a week. The members of the club have been developing positive relationships with the local CSO's and this culminated in a football game between the two groups. A number of youth club members have just achieved their 200hrs for Millennium volunteers

- 4.15. The youth club members planted trees in the area around the youth club. They are responsible for the upkeep of the trees and so far there has been no damage to any of the trees. There is a diary in Greasby Youth Club which the members use to write about youth club life and include photographs of activities. The members keep this diary up to date.

St Mary's Youth Club

- 4.16. The period from Easter is a big expedition season for the club and at least one group per weekend are on expedition, from Bronze to Gold. Over 200 young people were involved in gaining community service and skills sections of DofE. The Tuesday club has enjoyed a wide range of activities, all organised by young volunteers. The volunteers took the Tuesday group bowling during the summer.

The youth club has a range of volunteers that are not only DofE but also include looked- after- children, and referrals from Social Services and school.

4.0. Duke of Edinburgh Award

During the summer holidays the Youth Service was able to offer an adventure activity programme to youth clubs and associated organisations. Over 160 young people took part in sailing, canoeing, rafting, climbing and adventure course activities which were delivered by both licensed operators and our own staff. Despite the inclement weather there was a 90% take up on the activities offered.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award staff continue to work with a group of Looked After Children in a bid to help them successfully complete their Bronze Awards. In August, most of this group attended a 3 day residential course at The Oaklands Centre where they engaged in a wide variety of outdoor activities. One young woman in particular was identified as having the potential to take a future lead role and will probably be invited back and given a work experience opportunity.

Wirral's D of E Open Award Centre is due to move premises again. Following a decision to vacate the Somerville Site at Gorsey Lane we have entered into negotiations regarding the use of the Wirral Alternative Schools Programme new premises at Solar Campus.

In our drive to make the Award available to everyone and to diversify its delivery we are now helping several new units run the Award. This includes Meadowside Special School where we will adapt the Award for pupils with complex learning difficulties.

Advisory Youth worker Special Needs and international work Need to find the info for this.

5.0. Wirral Youth Theatre /Youth Arts

Drama developments

5.1. 'Street of Crocodiles'

Complicite's "Street of Crocodiles" was a challenging, ambitious production which helped a cast and crew of twenty young people learn a vast amount of new theatrical skills for their future careers in performing arts.

It was inspired by the life and stories of the Polish writer Bruno Schulz and set in provincial Poland in the early part of the twentieth century. The cast and crew of young people went through an intense training and rehearsal period involving training with the London based Theatre de Complicite who were the original creators of the piece.

Performances took place at Pacific Road Arts Centre over two days and received excellent feedback from audiences.

Duke Street Tenants Association' Community Play

- 5.2. Two drama workers and Peer Educators worked with young people at the Riverside Community Centre every Friday evening for two months. The work culminated in a performance for family and the local community which was a great success. As a result we are now working with the area Community Development Worker to develop a full programme of arts activities including dance, drama and music projects.

Special Schools Engagement project

- 5.3. The Friday morning drama sessions with twenty pupils from Meadowside and Foxfield Schools based at Callister Youth Club have provided them with the opportunity to achieve accreditation for their learning through the Arts Council Bronze Award scheme.

Dance Developments

Youth Dance England (YDE) National Conference

- 5.4. Eight WYT Peer Educators were invited to be Youth Dance England's young delegates at their annual conference held in Liverpool. They asked relevant questions of dance organisations and to keynote speakers and indeed challenged the thinking of many dance professionals and decision makers surrounding community dance development. They also performed at the conference and supported workers to facilitate a workshop on Dance Peer Education methods at WYT. They were a credit to the Service. Since then WYT dance department has been featured in several youth arts and dance periodicals.

Youth Dance England Migrations Project

- 5.5. The dance group was also asked to be part of an en-promenade piece of dance performed at the Lowry Theatre in Manchester in August. For this they performed with three other dance groups including young travellers and young people from Kurdistan.

Liverpool European Capital of Culture

- 5.6. WYT were commissioned by the Liverpool Culture Company to take a lead role in the youth dance element of Liverpool's 800th Birthday Pageant and performances throughout the day. This involved choreographing the movement pieces for the pageant and the three stage areas spread across the city centre. Over forty Wirral young people were involved in the day and the feedback has been brilliant and ensured our role in the celebrations in 2008.

Somerset residential

- 5.7. The Peer Education Dance Group fundraised to link with Somerset Youth Service for a week long residential peer education project with their young people. Eight young people from Wirral facilitated and mentored, choreographed and directed the project and have forged an extremely positive partnership which they are keen to build on for future projects.

Schools dance

- 5.8. WYT continues to work with Schools Sport Development and as part of this provided a Summer Dance School Coaching Programme. In addition to this WYT facilitated two days of dance with young people with disabilities.

New Media Developments

Misundastood

- 5.9. Connexions commissioned WYT to work with their PAYP project to produce a DVD and resource package exploring issues related to SECTION 30. In partnership with 19 PAYP young people, PAYP key workers and Merseyside Police have created a resource suitable to be used in schools and with youth projects which encourages young people to discuss their rights and responsibilities in relation to the law and help them to make positive choices. The DVD called 'Misundastood' was launched on 17th September at a premiere night at Pacific Road.

Shaftsbury Youth Club DVD

- 5.10. The new media and tech team have been working with Shaftsbury Youth Club to produce a video which will be used to promote the club and celebrate their work in the community.

Music Developments

- 5.11. Sound Steps continues to offer a range of music related activities to young people across the Wirral. Much of this work was on display at the Streetwaves event held at the beginning of Summer at Pacific Road involving 50 young people performing for to a packed theatre.

As part of the project funded by the National Charity - Youth Music – we have been able to take on two part-time music apprentices who will be starting work with us in October.

The Future – The Faces Project

- 5.12. The full programme of activities kick off again in October with all groups working towards WYT's Capital of Culture project entitled FACES. This will involve a range of mixed media projects using the theme of famous people from Wirral from history and the present. All the projects will culminate in a two week festival of performances and presentations at Pacific Road in summer 2008. An application to Young Roots Heritage Lottery is currently being submitted to fund the project.

6.0 Response

- 6.1 During the period July to September, staff at Response delivered a total of 888 support, advice and counselling sessions at the Response agency .

Housing Advice Service

- 6.2 Two hundred and thirty individual young people have accessed the Housing Advice Service at Response during June, July and August. Of these, 111 were young people already known to the agency and 119 were new individuals to the agency attending for advice and support around housing issues. Approximately 50% were just seeking information but of the remaining young people:-

23 were accommodated
33 are staying between family and friends
72 of are still receiving ongoing support
13 returned home after cooling down period.

Homelessness Prevention in Schools

- 6.3 During this quarter we have delivered 35 workshops to 692 young people across the Borough in secondary schools. Feedback from young people and teachers remains positive. This project is being recognised nationally as a model of good practice on a Government National Youth Homelessness Scheme website being launched on October 18th at the National Youth Homelessness Conference at St. Basils in Birmingham.

Developments Regarding Youth Homelessness

- 6.4 In response to concerns about vulnerable 16-17 year olds being accommodated in B+B accommodation, managers from Response, the Head of the Youth and Play Service have met several times with key strategic officers from CYPD, Housing, Connexions and Leaving Care. As a result of the meetings, a small sub-group was convened, charged with the task of devising a joint protocol and assessment tool between housing and social care.

70. Play Section

Big Lottery Submission

- 7.1 A sub-group of the Wirral Play Partnership met to finalise projects to be included as part of Wirral's play portfolio and was approved by Cabinet on 26th July 2007.

(1) The report noted and recommended proposals accepted as Wirral's portfolio of projects to be submitted to the BIG Lottery before the final deadline 10 September 2007; and
(2) the title of Youth Service Advisory Committee (YSAC) amended to Youth and Play Service Advisory Committee (YAPSAC) and it to receive regular progress reports on the implementation of the Play Strategy.

The Wirral 'Play in the Peninsula' portfolio has 5 distinct projects identified through a comprehensive consultation and audit which was the basis for the Wirral Play Strategy and Implementation plan 2007- 2012. These projects were submitted as part of the application.

Community Play Rangers

- 7.2 An Outreach play project focusing on urban parks, play areas open spaces, streets and children's informal play spaces, engaging with children aged 5-13 in promoting safe, accessible outdoor play opportunities. Community Play Rangers will facilitate face to face play activities which will be regularly delivered after-school and during holidays in identified areas of need across Wirral.

Participation and Play

- 7.3 Play Practitioners will work with Local Play Partnerships to develop, plan and deliver free play activities in identified areas of need in the Wirral. This will enable the dissemination of good practice, involve children and young people in design and deliver, and increase access to local play provision. This will ensure the local delivery of play provision is inclusive and works with the most marginalised children and young people in communities.

Adventure and Nature Play

- 7.4 Increase the range of play opportunities in equipped play areas, to challenge and stimulate children's abilities and development. These types of development in the heart of local communities, will create new and different types of play environments where children and young people will meet different challenges, risks and experiences. Natural and varied features will be incorporated into these play spaces to enhance play value and experiences

Quality in Play

- 7.5 One of the main priorities in the Play Strategy Implementation Plan 2007-2012 is engagement and involvement of other groups as well as those specifically involved in play who have impact on children's access to quality play. There are groups of people and organisations other than playworkers working with children and young people who would also benefit greatly from specialist play training.

Local Play Partnerships

- 7.6 This project will create four local Play Partnerships with representatives from local play providers, resident groups, play advocates, children and young people to develop, plan and design local play opportunities with support from Play Practitioners. Each Partnership within a district area will look at local area play needs by creating opportunities for local communities to organise free play activities and work towards new free play initiatives.

The project will encourage all agencies in the local community to work in a co-ordinated way to address local play needs, through the development of local area play plans.

Wirral Play Strategy

- 7.7 The process to identify need for the portfolio began with the development of the Wirral Play Strategy 'A Playful Peninsula' and the associated Implementation Plan 2007- 2012. Initially, a series of stakeholder seminars, brought together local authority officers and representatives from voluntary agencies which led to the preparation and distribution of a detailed discussion paper used to produce a series of themes.

These key findings of the consultation were combined with the initial themes to produce 5 main priorities and 50 objectives for action which have been included as part of the Play Strategy and Implementation Plan (see Play Strategy Implementation Plan 2007-2012).

8. Financial implications

There are none arising directly from this report.

9. Staffing implications

There are none arising directly from this report.

10. Equal opportunities implications

The Youth & Play Service through its work actively promotes equal opportunities.

11. Community safety implications

There are none

12. Local Agenda 21 implications

There are none

13. Planning implications

There are none

14. Anti-poverty implications

The work of the Service seeks to tackle some of the causes of poverty

15. Social inclusion implications

Greater social inclusion is promoted through the work of the Service

16. Local Member Support implications

There are none

17. Background paper

There are none

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 18.** The Committee is asked to note the report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services