

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 7 MAY 2008

### REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### TITLE OF REPORT - HEAD OF YOUTH & PLAY SERVICE

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report informs the Committee of developments in the Youth & Play Service since the last meeting. The Committee is asked to note the report.

#### 1. Staff Movements

No staff movements to report for the last quarter.

#### Area Team reports

#### 2.0 BIRKENHEAD AND BEBINGTON AREA

2.1 Overall the team have had the expected seasonal increase in numbers of young people attending, with most clubs reporting on how busy they have become.

2.2 After a very quiet winter period the numbers in Bebington Youth Club are picking up, the members have formed a members committee and an implementation group for Health Promoting Youth Settings. There is a Development Plan in place to ensure the club meets the needs of the young people and this is progressing.

2.3 The newly refurbished Cavendish Youth Club is proving very popular with young people, there are now separate areas for specific activities including a chill area, a computer room and a fitness room. The club have been working in partnership with the Wirral Youth Theatre on Drama and Dance. The D.J. ing and M.C.ing is very popular with the young people, the activity is likely to continue for some time. Funding from the Area Forum has enabled a first aid course to go ahead with eight young people looking forward to achieving an accredited outcome.

2.4 To raise funds at Charing Cross Methodist Youth Club, it was decided to organise a joint Play and Youth Service event and a sleep over was held. "Stay Awake Over" raised £300 and was enjoyed by all.

2.5 The numbers at Eastham Youth Club are very high with up to sixty young people in attendance; work continues on the Youth Achievement Awards, the Health Promoting Youth Unit work is now underway. The group have decided to start with the physical health and wellbeing section and are planning activities to meet the criteria. A Smoking Awareness session was held to coincide with No Smoking Day.

#### 3.0 Wirral Youth Service Outreach Team.

3.1 The context and style of outreach youth work employed enables Wirral Youth Service Outreach Team to engage with a wide cross section of the youth population of Wirral. Not only does WYSOT provide a universal outreach service to young people but also is able to deliver targeted work to disadvantaged and marginalized young people through out Wirral. Staff development and training are important to the professional development needed to deliver a quality service to young people. Mike Holbrook, Neighbourhood Youth Worker, Wallasey Young People's Project has achieved a Level 5 Award in Management from the Institute of Leadership and Management. Staff have taken up other training opportunities including smoking cessation which will assist them in their health promoting work.

- 3.2 All neighbourhood outreach projects are now registered in the Health Promoting Youth Settings scheme and working towards an award. Birkenhead Youth Action Project and South Wirral Young People's Project have both achieved bronze and silver awards.
- 3.3 The work undertaken by Birkenhead Youth Action Project supported by Tranmere Together and Tranmere Alliance, has successfully reduced incidents of anti social behaviour in the vicinity of Bedford Rd. Young people from this area identified a need for them to have greater access to local facilities and funding was obtained to light and make a football cage available for use during dark nights. A group of young people from Rock Ferry are involved in a Bikes for Africa project. A group from the Woodlands Estate have undertaken a first aid course 'Save a Friend.'
- 3.4 The Deeside Young People's Project (DYPP) has continued to work in the mid and west Wirral areas. Work has been undertaken with several skater groups who received £25,000 from the Youth Capital Fund towards facilities. They had raised other money, but unfortunately, there was a significant short fall in the money needed and insufficient time to raise the balance. The YOF/YCF Grant Panel has agreed that the young people can use the money to purchase a new Kontakta Bus for the area. DYPP has developed a positive working relationship with the Police, targeting those at risk of offending and involved in risk taking behaviour. A successful school holiday positive activities programme has been developed with fifty one young people participating at February half term and sixty two at Easter. The participants came from Prenton, Hoylake, West Kirby, Greasby, Newton, Moreton and Heswall.
- 3.5 The Principal Youth Worker with the Fender Youth Action Project works with young people from Beechwood and Ballantyne Estates. The young people greatly enjoyed their visit to the theatre to see Blood Brothers and this has proved to be an excellent starting point for their Year of Culture activity theme.
- 3.6 The North End Young People's Project has been successful in targeting groups engaged in risk taking behaviour and engaging them in positive activities. The young people from the different street groups have met at the project base in Laird Street to design and plan their programme. Key elements of programmes of the three current groups are: participating in activities ranging from dance sessions, a visit to the theatre and outdoor adventure; workshops on health issues relevant to the group and making a positive contribution to the community, e.g. making a film about road safety for primary school children.
- 3.7 Noctorum Young People's Project works with young people in public places that include the Noctorum Estate, the Townfield Lane vicinity and the Arno. Where appropriate, some of this work is undertaken with the support of Response substance misuse workers and on occasion, with Community Support Officers. Their knowledge of the young people in the neighbourhood and the relationships built up with them has enabled the youth workers to develop a varied programme of activities that meets the needs and interests of the young people. The girls will soon have completed a Youth Opportunity Funded project that has involved making clothes for themselves by recycling other clothes. The angling sessions in Birkenhead, provided by Get Hooked on Fishing, during the Easter holidays proved to be very popular and there will further such opportunities at Whit and during the summer holidays. Support was given to a live band event at the Sixth Form College.
- 3.8 South Wirral Young People's Project operates in New Ferry, Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham, using streetwork and the Kontakta Bus to engage with young people. Involving young people in activities and projects enables more in depth and sustained work to be done. At the Digit Project, young people have been preparing for this year's growing season, making the ground ready and planting seeds. An independent living project uses the Digit Community Room as a base with the young people planning the menu and preparing a healthy dinner for themselves and those there to do gardening. Some young people attend as part of a placement. Recently, these young people entered a competition and won £200 worth of vouchers from Tesco who are now supporting this initiative with donations of goods. To make the community more aware of the positive things young people do and to bridge the generation gap, the young people gave a

presentation to the Bromborough Evening Townswomen's Guild in February. Subsequently, Guild members donated equipment and will visit the project in the near future. The SWYPP's Neighbourhood Youth Worker, along with the police and a member of the Community Safety Team, has given presentations at school assemblies in the Bebington area to give information about positive activities for young people and the consequences of anti social behaviour.

3.9 Wallasey Young People's Project has continued to work with young people in Wallasey, Seacombe, Liscard, Poulton and New Brighton. As well as addressing risk taking behaviour issues, both on the street and by making use of the Kontakta Bus for workshops, the youth workers have successfully engaged young people in a range of activities. Thirteen young people have completed a ten-week accredited climbing course at Awesome Walls. Working with Poulton Victoria AFC and Sports Development staff, WYPP has facilitated sports sessions at the Lottery funded pitches at Weatherhead School. During the Easter holidays, young people enjoyed mountain biking in Delamere Forest, a visit to Manley Mere and a bowling night.

#### 4.0 **Wallasey/ Deeside**

4.1 St Mary's Youth Club have been preparing for the expedition season. For the Bronze and Silver Awards, the young people have been doing map work, community service, skill development menu planning and first aid. The Tuesday Club participants have taken part in arts and craft sessions, Disco's, a Disability Awareness course and a Presentation night for helpers.

4.2 Seacombe Youth Project is now operating a youth club from the YMCA on a Wednesday evening and delivers an outreach session on a Monday night. As part of a joint project with Wallasey Young People's Project, a football coaching course attended by thirty four young people has been organised at Weatherhead School. Funding is being sought by young people from the Seacombe Project and other community groups to make repairs and improvements to the Seacombe Football cage. The young people use the facility on a nightly basis want to be involved in this planned work and are willing to give up their time to support the project.

4.3 Leasowe Youth Club which now operates from the Addy (The Adventure Playground) has been going well however, there have been a few occasions where Young People's behaviour has had to be challenged. The staff team are currently looking at how they can introduce new ground rules and how they can work alongside the Play staff to manage the transition stage, giving the 14+ young people ownership. Young people at Leasowe have been using the Giant Jenga, a resource covering topics such as sexual health, drugs and alcohol and personal safety.

4.4 On "No smoking Day", young people at Moreton Youth Club took part in surveys, activities and questionnaires around smoking. Young people made a display for the club. Information was made available about the type of support available to help young people give up smoking. As part of an intergenerational project, six young people, three staff and three pensioners took part in a Health and Hygiene programme. At the end of the course three young people, three staff and one pensioner took the exam. At a presentation Night in the club, Wirral PCT presented members and staff with certificates for food & safety. Food Month was used to promote healthy cooking with celebration events for Pancake Tuesday and Apple Week.

4.5 Young people from Fender Youth Club have taken part in the ten week expedition element of the Motivate (Raleigh International) scheme. Four new young people have gone on their first training residential before their expedition which will be in July. This was a 5 day residential in Buxton and whilst there they have completed their first aid certificate. Senior members at Fender are taking part in the V award and undertaking voluntary work in the club. During half term, fifteen young people worked with the police to make picnic benches which have since been presented to a local residential home for the elderly.

- 4.6 West Kirby Youth Club has seen a significant rise in young people, from having on average 6 to 10 young people to 50 to 70 attending on a nightly basis. On Thursdays, young people can access a range of activities including football, unihoc and basketball. Through a successful bid from YOF/YCF a Multi Media Room is being developed, once completed, the room will offer computers, a projection screen and computers. Young people will be able to make their own videos and music cds.
- 4.7 At Pensby Youth Club, a Members Committee has been formed to give young people more of a say in the running of the club and eventually in the running of the whole community centre via the Joint Management Committee. Parties and other events for Valentine's Day and Easter were well attended. The young people helped in the planning and preparation in partnership with Community Support Officers. The Health Promoting Youth Unit Implementation Group has been established with the first meeting taking place on 1 May.
- 4.8 Greasby Youth Club has organised a number of projects covering a variety of issues including sexual health, bullying, alcohol misuse and healthy eating. Young people were successful in receiving money from the Youth opportunity Fund for two laptops and a printer, which will be used by the young people to look up, up to date information, on a range of issues.

## 5.0 Curriculum Development Services

### Participation Developments

- 5.1 The United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) Election results were announced on the 28 February 2008. In this year's elections Fifty three young people stood for election and Eight Thousand, Two hundred and six votes were cast. There has been a change regarding the length of term of office for the Members of the Youth Parliament (MYP) which has been extended to two years. This year, to facilitate the change in term of office, 2 MYP's were elected and 3 deputies. The 2 deputies who received the most votes will become next year's MYP's. Already, the Deputies and MYP's have been very busy, attending a training day and a 3 day North West Regional residential. They have each identified campaigns that they will lead on for Wirral and will be attending the 5 day National Sitting at Exeter University in July.
- 5.2 Youth Opportunity/Youth Capital Fund (YOF/YCF) Grant Panel allocated all of the funding for the 07/08 year. Some of the group carried out monitoring visits of successful projects to ensure young people's involvement in the project's decision making processes. At a recent meeting, the group evaluated their work over the past year. In preparation for the next round of YOF/YCF they decided on how to distribute the full grant to agreed priorities. This will either be allocated following application or commissioned. They made decisions on how to distribute the 08/09 funding and made amendments to the allocation process and related paperwork.

## 6.0 Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts (WYT)

### 'Voice Of The Learner' Project

- 6.1 WYT facilitated a pan Merseyside project with over eighty young people from ten schools for young people with a range of disabilities. A series of drama, dance and music workshops were run by a team of WYT workers and peer educators (some of whom are disabled young people) in Wirral, Sefton and Halton schools exploring themes such as:
- what makes their learning enjoyable and positive
  - what the blocks are to their learning and progression
  - how and if they are able to get their views across
  - how involved they are in decisions about their education
  - what are their dreams and aspirations
  - what concerns they have about transition from school

- 6.2 All the participants came together at a conference on February 28th held at Aintree Racecourse to share their work and put their views across in a safe and creative format. A DVD is being made of the process which will ensure that recommendations made by young people to improve educational services can be promoted to a wider audience. A dissemination event for service professionals is planned to launch the DVD and report planned from 9 June.
- 6.3 WYT is now an accredited centre for the Arts Council's Bronze Arts Award Scheme. Six young people have achieved the award so far with another fifteen due to qualify by the end of May – including pupils from Meadowside and Foxfield schools.
- 6.4 The team of BTEC qualified Peer Educators continue to work on a range of projects including the Voice of The Learner. A small group will be performing a piece at a Chorley PCT conference in May.
- 6.5 'First Class Peer Education Theatre Company' is now writing a play based on the consultation carried out with youth groups across Wirral which was funded by YOF. This piece will tour youth clubs, community centres and schools. They are also working on a piece commissioned by Wirral PCT on alcohol misuse which will be performed in four parks over the summer 2008 and taken into schools in 2009.
- 6.6 The dance team continue to deliver curriculum based dance for Sports Development in several schools at present and are facilitating a schools and community dance event at Wallasey Town Hall at the end of this term. In addition to the regular weekly dance programme, the dance team are also providing additional support and training for GCSE and A level dance students who are struggling with their studies.
- 6.7 Two young men from the project attended a Youth Music conference in London and were elected as the North West representatives which will also bring additional opportunities for young people in Wirral. Youth Music also invited us to apply for Funding to run the V – funded music volunteer programme and we have been awarded £33k to run the programme in Wirral over the next three years.
- 6.8 Rehearsals have now started on the 'FACES' project in which young people have been supported to gather information about the cultural heritage of Wirral and the project will celebrate the cultural history and diversity of Wirral through various arts mediums. The FACES performances will be at Pacific Road at the end of July. The drama team have also been working on several outreach programmes and the Riverside Centre Friday night drama project culminated in a community performance in February.
- 6.9 WYT now receives regular commissions to develop promotional and issue based DVD packages. This work currently includes:
- A promotional DVD for Connexions to be used by PA's to help induct NEET young people on the Activity Agreement Pilot. For this we will be working with young people currently on the programme to produce the film which will involve them in gaining a range of skills including presenting, camera work, editing and sound track creation and recording.
  - A DVD raising awareness of around young people and self harm commissioned by Safe Guarding Children. This will be performed by the peer educators and be used as a training tool for professionals.

## 7.0 Response

- 7.1 During the period Jan – March 2008, nine hundred and nine young people have attended appointments and received advice, support and counselling from Response. We have dealt with a number of issues including homelessness, eating disorders, risk taking behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse. Issues that young people have presented with have been very challenging and often complex.

In addition to the nine hundred and nine young people appointments at Response, one thousand two hundred and fifty nine young people have been supported through outreach street work and through educational workshops. We have delivered 130 targeted drug and alcohol workshops. A lot of multi agency work has taken place this quarter in which we have agreed joint work and protocols and have secured further funding for our drug and alcohol work. New schemes of work include 'Stop Gap' which is a project that helps support vulnerable homeless young people. See below for more detail.

- 7.2 The training of off licence staff has also taken place this quarter in partnership with the PCT and Trading Standards Dept. Our aim is to tackle under age alcohol sales. This is the second training event we have delivered, both of which have been well attended. Evaluation returns have been extremely positive and further training will be provided in the lead up to the summer. All sections within Response have been working very hard to support young people and below is a summary of work carried this quarter.
- 7.3 237 Young people have accessed the housing advice service at Response during this quarter with a total of 433 contacts. Of the 237, 151 were young people already known to the Agency and 86 were new individuals. Approximately half were seeking one off pieces of information or advice but of the remainder:-
- 31 were accommodated
  - 23 are staying between family and friends
  - 57 are still receiving ongoing support
  - 16 returned home after cooling down period.
- 7.4 As part of our preventative work, during this quarter we delivered 40 workshops and bite sized sessions to 587 teenagers in schools and other settings. The external funding for this project ended in Dec 07, however this has been identified as an action point in the Draft Homelessness Strategy to secure continuation funding for the work until 2010. The project has been recognised nationally as a model of good practice.
- 7.5 In this quarter Wirral Supporting People Team approached the Children and young people's Department to develop and deliver a young homeless supported accommodation project. This will benefit young people aged 16-18. The project will be called 'Stop Gap' and will be managed by Response. There will be 6 rented properties i.e. bedsitters, dispersed across Wirral. The project will try to reduce the use of B+B for 16 and 17 year olds. The beds will be aimed at vulnerable young people for whom existing young peoples supported accommodation is unsuitable. The project will also offer very short term respite accommodation for young people, struggling at home. Combined with support and mediation it is hope that the young person will be able to maintain their long term place in the family home. There will be 2 full time, resettlement workers based at Response to support the project delivery.
- 7.6 The Counselling Service has seen a large number of referrals into the service. Referrals have been made for 81 young people who wish to use one of the therapies that the counselling service has to offer. A total of 143 individual young people have been seen on a 239 occasions. Young people who have been involved with the counselling service were successful in a YOF funding bid. This enabled a much needed supply of fresh resources to be purchased which help young people who are struggling with certain issues, including help with bullying, bereavement, relationship problems, anger, and art therapy. The funds also helped to purchase saveaways for those young people who struggle to use the service due to financial difficulties.

## 8.0 **Duke of Edinburgh's Award**

- 8.1 There are approximately 750 young people engaged in the Award this year, participating in a wide variety of skills, service and physical activities. The Award in Wirral is delivered from a range of establishments including schools youth clubs, looked after children centres, pupil referral units and parent support groups.
- 8.2 Partnership working plays a big role in the successful delivery of the Award. With this in mind we are always exploring ways of providing Award opportunities in conjunction with other organisations. We are currently working in close liaison with Merseyside Police and their school imbedded officers, their community safety officers and their cadets.
- 8.3 Wirral Volunteer Centre is also able to assist young people in finding interesting and challenging placements to complete the service section of their Award.
- 8.4 The expedition season is now well under way and the forthcoming months will see literally hundreds of young people embark on Bronze, Silver and Gold expeditions in areas such as North Wales, The Lake District and The Yorkshire Dales. We sincerely hope that they will experience better weather than last year's ventures. Finally, so far this year, 12 young people from Wirral have achieved Gold Awards and are expected to visit St. James's Palace in the near future.

## 9.0 **International Work/ Special Needs**

- 9.1 The group of 14 young people have now been recruited and are busy working together to raise the necessary funding. They also have a full programme of meetings and workshops on a diverse range of subjects such as racism, health & safety, culture, etc. The Chinese young people will visit Wirral from July 12th to July 26th with our group visiting Hong Kong from September 7th to the 21st 2008.

The Wirral group of young people are also responsible for the formation of the programme in Wirral and, as the group will be staying in self catering accommodation, all the domestic chores that go with this. The Themes for this years exchange is Participation and Culture.

- 9.2 As part of the Azores Youth Exchange, we have a small group working on the reciprocal visit to Ponta Delgada which is taking place in late July subject to the Portuguese group obtaining the necessary finance from the European Youth Fund. They will be joined by groups from Poland, Czech Republic, Spain and Estonia besides the Portuguese group.
- 9.3 After a slow start to the year bookings at Ivy farm Bunkhouse are now starting to pick up. Over the past 12 months the accommodation has had a full face lift both inside and out. We have all new showers and toilets with just two small reception areas to be decorated.
- 9.4 Plans are already well in hand for this year's Special Needs Summer Programme. This will include residentials, workshops and visits. Emphasis this year will be on Healthy Lifestyles.

## 10.0 **Play Service**

- 10.1. Wirral Council's bid for it's allocation of Big Lottery Children's Play programme funding (£881,208.66) over 3 years is progressing and will be submitted by 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The Wirral Play Partnership led on the development of the Wirral Play Strategy implementation plan and identified the portfolio of projects for BIG Lottery proposal. Currently a number of issues are being discussed in partnership with agencies to facilitate more and better play opportunities for children and young people

- Safer routes to play
- More opportunities for informal supervised play
- More risk and challenge in equipped play areas
- Access to natural play environments

- Presence of trained community play workers
- Use of schools for community play activities
- Formal supervised play provision e.g. open access play scheme

10.2 The Wirral 'Play in the Peninsula' portfolio has 7 distinct projects identified through a comprehensive consultation and audit which was the basis for the Wirral Play Strategy and Implementation plan 2007- 2012.

### **Project 1 - Community Play Rangers**

10.3 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.

### **Project 2 to 5 - Adventure and Nature Play**

10.4 Increase the range of play opportunities in four 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 templates for play areas and different types of play environments.

10.5. In areas of identified need, and in partnership with user groups and friends of Parks groups, increase the value of the existing play provision through the inclusion of more varied and challenging equipment, which will allow children to test boundaries and explore risk.

### **Project 6 - Play Practitioners Project**

10.6. The Play Practitioners project will provide five supervised open access play sessions for children and young people aged 5 -13 years in identified areas of most need across the Wirral. It will complement existing play facilities for children and young people and target gaps in current play provision.

10.7. The play sessions will be held in five different locations across the Wirral. They will be freely accessible to children, free of charge and children will be free to choose what play activities they participate in. The project will be staffed by a Senior Play worker, 2 playworkers and local volunteers. The project will work with community groups develop, plan and deliver free play activities in identified areas of need in the Wirral. This will ensure the local delivery of play provision is inclusive and works with the most marginalised (vulnerable) children and young people in communities. This project will be delivered by voluntary play sector organisation (to be confirmed).

### **Project 7 - Play For All – Inclusive Play Project**

#### **Play For All**

10.8. An inclusive play project will focus on engaging and providing play opportunities for vulnerable children and young people aged 5 -13 years. The project will reduce barriers to play for children and young people with specific needs and provide access to local play opportunities in an inclusive play environment. Some children with specific needs are excluded from ordinary social group activities, due to accessibility, locality, transport and resources issues. The deployment of playworkers with the required skills will help to address this, and provide a structure in which children with specific needs can engage in free play on a regular basis.

10.9. Children will be directed to their local play setting, to access indoor and outdoor play which will promote a 'provision together' approach, encouraging children to access local play provision, so that they can engage with their peers in an inclusive play environment. Open access play provision is inherently flexible and the inclusive nature of the schemes means issues emanating from social exclusion can be addressed. This would also mean working with parents, foster carers, support groups, schools, children's service's to ensure a co-ordinated approach when delivering the service.



## **Play Champion**

10.10 Cllr Chris Meaden has been appointed the Wirral Play Champion. Priorities will be to visit and tour Play Projects, meet with children and young people, listen to and act upon their views on play with the support of the Play Partnership. The Play Champion's first official engagement will be the Wirral Play Day 'Risk and Children's Play' at Birkenhead Park on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

## **11.0 National Developments**

11.1. The Government's agenda for Youth Services as outlined in Aiming High. The Ten Year Strategy for Youth Services is starting to impact on local services. In Wirral's case there has been an uplift in the allocation in Youth Opportunity fund from £210,000 to £317,000. The Youth Capital base fund remains the same at £182,000, there has however been a one off uplift to the YCF of £450,000. Guidance on how this should be allocated is not available at the time of writing this report.

11.2. In addition to the uplift in YOF/YCF local authorities have been invited to submit bids for funding of between 1 million and 5 million pounds. This initiative known as My Place is part of the "Places to Go and Things to Do" agenda. Further information on My Place will be made available at a seminar on 14 May. A local group has been established to oversee the preparation of the bid.

Maureen McDaid  
Head of Youth & Play Service