

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details progress of the Wallasey Youth Hub since its opening in June 2010.

1. Background

Wallasey Youth Hub is one of four Hubs to operate in each district of Wirral. All four Hubs will operate over five evenings including Fridays and Saturdays.

Wallasey Youth Hub is unique in that it is based in Wallasey Fire Station as result of a partnership with Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. The cost of £452,000 for the alterations to the building was funded by the Youth Capital Fund Plus. Operating terms have been determined via a Fair Use Agreement over a period of 15 years.

Wallasey Youth Hub officially opened on the 15 June 2010. An evening of music and dance preformed by a wide range of young people from across Wirral launched the event. Acts included beat-boxers, break-dancers, bands and vocalists. The event was a celebration of talent co-ordinated by Wirral Youth Theatre.

Youth and Play Service Development Plan requires there is consultation with young people about what should be offered by Youth Service via its hubs and centres.

1.1 Wallasey Youth Hub's Youth Offer

The Wallasey Youth Hub's current offer includes:

- Opportunities to meet with friends, be safe, have fun and engage with staff
- Core activities such as internet, computers, TV, light refreshments
- Youth Arts via the Youth Theatre. The Hub's current Youth Arts Project is break-dancing workshops with a large group of young males.
- Response delivers a drop-in service once a week within the Hub. This provides young people with advice or sign-posting. Young people can be referred to other agencies who can give appropriate advice around housing, substance misuse, sexual health, counselling etc.
- Duke of Edinburgh: An Open Award Centre is based within the Hub, providing young people with the chance to gain Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. This Centre operates two evenings per week.
- Opportunities for young people to have their say about things that are important to them including how the Hub operates. This will be facilitated through a number of ways including:
 - Wallasey Youth Hub Members Committee
 - Youth Forums
 - Sitting on management committees/ friends of groups
 - Youth Parliament
 - Local decision making groups

All this information contributes to the unit's annual Youth Offer.

1.2 Membership and Attendance

Wallasey Youth Hub has attracted young people from across the Wallasey area. So far, membership has reached 201 young people. On average there are between 20 and 30 attendances per evening. The range of young people attending include:

- Young people from all the schools in our district
- NEET young people
- Young people living in areas of high deprivation
- Young people with learning and behavioural difficulties.
- Young people with substance misuse issues
- Young people in or at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system
- Looked after young people

During the initial months of operation, emphasis has been placed on getting to know the young people and building relationships with them. Young people have been consulted on what they would like on offer within their Hub, in order to ensure the youth offer addresses the needs and interests of the local young people.

A number of activities requested or needed by young people have already taken place or are ongoing including, arts and crafts, electric guitar workshops, cooking, internet safety workshop, MC-ing and a trip go-carting.

1.3 Partners

In addition to the Fire & Rescue Service, the Hub is working with a number of other partner agencies and is looking at developing further partnerships in the near future. Partners worked with so far include:

- Brook Advisory Service – Two brook workers have worked alongside youth workers to engage a group of young men, who will be taking part in their “Men Maters” project which is due to start soon.
- Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) – The Hub has developed relationships with the local PCSOs who regularly call into the Hub.
- Connexions Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) – Jackie Gray, the PAYP key worker for Wallasey, has been in close contact with the Hub and has referred young people needing extra support.
- Health Services in Schools – A youth worker and school nurse from Health Services in Schools attended three evenings during summer. They offered young people advice around all aspects of their health needs. They delivered informal sessions around sexual health, contraception and alcohol misuse, resulting in 13 young people gaining recorded outcomes.

Following on from this, a number of the young people had one to one consultations with the nurse within the Hub (this could have been for anything from condom distribution to STI testing). The young people found it helpful to be able to have Health Services in Schools within their Hub and said that they would never access this type of service had it not been here.

- Oldershaw School – Oldershaw School will be using the Hub during term time for their off-site facility.
- Spanish Student Exchange Programme - During the summer the Hub was used as a school for 42 Spanish young people who were here to learn English for four weeks. During the evening a lot of the Spanish young people attended the HUB, allowing our young people to mix with young people from another country. During the semi-final of the World Cup we had a

Spanish evening and both our young people and the Spanish young people watched the match and supported Spain

- Claremount School – During July mentors from Claremount School brought a minibus of young people who lived in the Wallasey area. The young people, who have moderate learning difficulties and can often be socially isolated outside of school, came for three evenings. The aim of the initiative was to encourage those young people to continue to come after the three days were over. The result of this was that five young people have continued to attend.

1.4 Future Developments

Wallasey District Provider Group - meets bi monthly. They are in the process of developing a coordinated youth offer for young people in Wallasey. The group includes statutory and voluntary youth projects.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service - The Hub are in talks with the Youth Engagement Officer from the fire service about how we can work together. They have said they can offer us courses around fire safety for the young people. There is a meeting with Dave Gary (Fire Youth Activity Advocate) later this month to talk about possible funding and joint projects for the future.

2. Financial Implications

There are no direct or immediate financial implications from this report. The Hub has been commissioned until 2013.

3. Staffing Implications

There are none.

4. Equal Opportunities Implications/Health Impact Assessment

There are no direct equality issues other than the Hub's services are available to all young people, particularly in the Wallasey District. The Hub provides access to health services for teenagers.

5. Community Safety Implications

The Hub works collaboratively with Police Community Support Officers to ensure the safety of young people.

6. Local Agenda 21 Implications

There are none.

7. Planning Implications

There are none.

8. Anti-poverty Implications

There are none.

9. Social Inclusion Implications

The Hub strives to increase participation of young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of the Borough's Youth Offer.

10. Local Member Support Implications

Elected Members, particularly from Wards in the Wallasey District, will be interested in this unique development for young people

11. Background Papers

- a) Press Release/Case Study of the opening of the Wallasey Youth Hub (Appendix 1)
<http://www.myplacesupport.co.uk/Case-Studies/wallasey-and-the-fire-station-of-the-future.html>
- b) Youth Hub Commissioning Report, Report off the Director Of Children's Services to Cabinet, 24th September 2009. Item 125.
<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=121&MIId=729&Ver=4>

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- (1) That the report be noted

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

WALLASEY YOUTH HUB - WIRRAL

Locating a youth hub in a fire station



When the young people of Wirral heard they were going to get a new and exciting youth hub they could hardly have guessed just how innovative it would be. Wirral certainly has a contender for most unusual place to build a youth hub - it was launched in a fire station!

Councillor Sheila Clarke, Wirral's Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning said: "This really is a breakthrough for all residents in the area. No more bored teenagers hanging around corners with nothing to do. The hubs have been designed with a high degree of input from young people themselves who have worked with enthusiasm and passion to help establish these new facilities."

Fire officers use the upstairs of the building whilst the youth facility is downstairs. Councillor Lesley Rennie, ward councillor for Wallasey and one of the Council's representatives on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, said: "To have such a fantastic facility within the fire station is great news for everyone."

The Wallasey youth hub is one of four centres operating five nights a week, including weekends. The four youth hubs are: Wallasey Fire Station, Birkenhead's Shaftesbury Youth Club, West Wirral's West Kirby Youth Hub, and South Wirral's Eastham Youth Hub.

Outreach work in Wirral has been divided into four district teams in line with the 'super clubs'. Councillor Sheila Clarke said: "Young people deserve the best in leisure facilities open at times they want and doing things they enjoy. I am very pleased that the hubs are now opening, offering fun and interesting activities to help keep young people engaged, safe and happy in Wallasey and across the whole of Wirral."

The new hubs were built after national and local consultation with young people showed a want for improved youth club provision, and greater availability. The young people asked, also said as long as the facilities were there they had no problems with arranging their own travel. Wirral residents had their wish for more modern facilities accessible at more convenient times granted when the locations and times of the hubs were expanded.

Councillor Clarke said: "Through the activities, including MCing, music, drama, dance, sports, and a range of support services, the project also aims to provide new chances and opportunities for local young people and help to tackle some of their problems including training, education, and health needs."

Although locating a youth hub in a fire station is a unique and rather quirky idea, the Council insist it isn't just a gimmick, but a positive move for young people in the area. Councillor Rennie said: "The Fire Service has a duty to teach young people about fire safety. It helps keep them safe and stops them making risky decisions." She added: "This sort of link-up is an excellent way to help with that and the Wallasey youngsters will also benefit from these modern facilities open at the times they want."



The plans for the area extend beyond just providing the youth hubs, they also include promoting and facilitating the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme so that young people from the whole borough have access to it.

The official launch of the Mill Lane hub lived up to the buzz that's been surrounding it's opening for months - attendees from the community were treated to break-dancers, beat-boxers and swing singers at the fire station, and even took part by performing music and dance acts of their own. The occasion was marked by speeches from Wirral's own Mayor, Councillor Alan Jennings, the deputy Chief Fire Officer Mike Hagen, and Head of Branch (Participation and Inclusion) Peter Edmondson. Mike Hagen said: "Wallasey is the blue print for what a modern fire station should be. It provides excellent facilities for fire fighters and is in the heart of the community, providing opportunities for everyone, young and old, to socialise, exercise and simply have a good time."

The funding which enabled the building of the youth hubs was from the Youth Capital Plus fund. Councillor Clarke said: "They will provide a safe space for young people to spend time in and socialise as well as take advantage of the advice and other services available."

The Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have agreed a lease for the hub for 15 years.