

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report advises the Committee of the work undertaken by the Youth and Play Service since the last meeting in January 2011. The Committee is asked to note the report.

1.0 Staff Movements

- 1.1 Cliff Wilson is finishing his secondment with the Service at Response to return to his substantive post in Parks and Gardens. His colleagues wish him well for the future.
- 1.2 Several colleagues will be leaving the Youth Service section before the end of June as part of the Council's voluntary severance/early voluntary retirement exercise. The majority of leavers occupy administrative roles within the Service. Their friends and colleagues in the Service acknowledge the significant contribution they have made over the years and wish them well for the future.

2.0 South Wirral District

- 2.1 South Wirral Youth Hub celebrated Chinese New Year with cultural awareness, food, art, traditions and celebrations. A Creative Cooking course was completed and parents were invited for the final evaluation and presentation of certificates. For Comic Relief, young people produced a display board in the Hub and, through a sewing project, made eye covers to enable them to experience lack of sight. Young people attending the Hub's garden project are currently learning to grow vegetables from seeds. Four young women have started the Virtual Baby training course. In partnership with Aiming High for Disabled Children, the Hub has been holding open days and big events for young people with disabilities. In addition, the Hub has been successful in receiving capital grants from Aiming High for inclusive equipment and alterations to the garden area. This has led to a number of young people with disabilities accessing the provision, particularly at the weekends. A number of these young people are now actively participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and have gained a NHS Creative Cooking Award.
- 2.2 South Wirral Outreach Team has continued to build and develop positive relationships with young people in the area. Young people attending the Trailblazer's project have enjoyed their first visit to Delamere Forest. They came back exhilarated and are now planning more trips. The project enables young people's physical and emotional health and wellbeing. The community room at the 'Dig It' project base continues to be used for various issue based work and projects. This month the base has been used to deliver drug and alcohol sessions to young people who are at risk of offending. This project is being run in partnership with Merseyside Police and the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and offers young people an opportunity to gain an NFCE award in drug and alcohol awareness.
- 2.3 Bebington Youth Club is enjoying increased numbers attending on a regular basis; this has led to more focused work. Recently a group of young people have been involved in a sexual health and relationship awareness project. The Club is also running successful sports evenings in partnership with Sports Development.

3.0. **Birkenhead District**

- 3.1 Birkenhead Youth Hub (Shaftsbury YC). The Hub organised a month long Sports Fitness programme for young people to participate in after the Christmas break. The Hub's dance troupe organised a Dance Show for family and friends and raised £900, with half the money raised being donated to the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Young people produced art work to celebrate Chinese New Year and display material was produced to highlight Holocaust Awareness Day.
- 3.2 South Birkenhead Outreach Team. A regular Tuesday evening football session takes place in Mersey Park. The session uses the Kontaktabus as a group work venue for those who are not playing football. Ten young people went on an Oaklands weekend where they were able to experience the world of outdoor education. Merseyside Police supported this weekend through providing an officer who acted as a driver for the group. This partnership work with the Police is growing and having positive outcomes for the teams' work with young people. A group of Asian young people have been contacted and they are now starting the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.
- 3.3 North Birkenhead Outreach Team. A group of young people were successful with a Youth Opportunity Fund bid earlier in the year. The last of the positive activities have been taking place over the past few months and they have included:
- A celebration of the Chinese New Year including dragon dancing; Oaklands weekend; relationship and sex education workshops; mountain biking in Delamere Forest; theatre trips; bowling.
- The team was involved with a joint project with Charing Cross Youth Club which culminated in a visit to Deeside Go-Karting circuit.
- 3.4 Charing Cross Youth Club young people are busy converting a store room into a sensory room, thanks to a successful application from the Aiming High for children with disabilities fund. Young people helped do the application for the fund, helped with decorating and have chosen the equipment to go into the room. The sensory room should be up and running in the near future.
- 3.5 Grange Baptist Youth Club, funded through the District Activity Fund, has regular attendances on a Saturday evening of over 80 young people. These numbers have been consistent over a two year period with over a hundred young people attending at times. As well as the usual table tennis and games, the young people have been working with Wirral Youth Theatre developing a dance routine which they will perform at the launch of the Pilgrim Street Arts Centre.
- 3.6 Callister Youth Club – young people have been involved in projects about different cultures and lifestyles, including Scottish - Burns Night, Irish - St. Patrick's Day and Chinese - Chinese New Year. Members have looked at the different lifestyles compared to their own, cooked and sampled different foods and compared other differences such as dress and culture.
- 3.7 Viking Youth Club has recently been to Oaklands to experience natural highs and team building. Young people have gained an AQA accreditation in planning and budgeting through various life skills such as cooking a two course meal. A group of senior members planned and arranged a V Zone night for other young people from across the Wirral. This event gave the opportunity for young people to perform in bands on three occasions during the year.

4.0. **West Wirral District**

- 4.1. West Wirral Youth Hub has been holding 'Youth Fest' Parties throughout the winter. They have been successful with up to forty young people attending. A members committee of six young senior members have been meeting to discuss future

projects and opportunities. All of the young people have an input into the running of the Hub and now feed directly into the Friends of West Wirral Youth Hub meetings. Health Promoting Youth Units work has started and the Hub aims to achieve their bronze accreditation by April 2011. On Saturday evenings a Show Choir has been formed. The Choir are working towards putting on a show in June 2011 to showcase the group and the Hub. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has started with a group of five Silver and six Bronze participants. On a Tuesday and Saturday evening there are sports sessions in the Concourse where young people can achieve an ASDAN accreditation. A young women's confidence and beauty project is starting in April 2011. The project will offer young women pamper nights, confidence and personal development workshops and will culminate in a fashion show at the end of the summer. Five young people from the Hub participated in a community day at Grange Park (West Kirby) planting trees and working alongside the local community and local residents.

- 4.2. West Wirral Outreach Team delivers multi sports activities on a Friday evening at Pensby High School in partnership with the Sports Development Team. Numbers have increased with over 30 young people attending the sessions which also use the Kontaktabus. The outreach team has now registered as a Duke of Edinburgh's Award unit and will use this to accredit young people's involvement in the Friday evening sport activities.
- 4.3. Fender Youth Club - Due to vacancies the Club is having some difficulties with low staff numbers. Therefore, the West Wirral Hub Manager and District Youth Worker have been working with the remaining club staff to deliver provision in the club on a Monday evening. Since January this evening has been attracting 25-45 young people. Young people attending have been made aware of other agencies and projects in the district, attempting to break the barriers of engagement from other projects outside the Woodchurch estate. The computer room has been open and the young people are looking in to what needs updating within the unit.
- 4.4. Greasby Youth Club has taken part in a series of workshops around relationships and sex education, healthy eating, drug and alcohol misuse and bullying. They have just completed the Silver Award on Health Promoting Youth Units. The Pavilion is currently being made ready for use after a fire earlier in the year. The Pavilion is used for structured group work and for young people who do not want to access the youth club. With the lighter nights coming workers can utilise provision within the park, such as the football and basketball courts.

5.0. **Wallasey District**

- 5.1. Wallasey Youth Hub has been delivering a Virtual Baby project which started in December. 19 young people have been split into two groups. The sessions are about problems and pressures, ambitions for the future, alcohol, risk taking behaviour and relationships and sex education. Oldershaw School use the Hub as an offsite facility during the day so mentors and teachers can work more intently with young people with learning and social needs. As a result of this work, six young people from the school have started coming to the Hub in the evening to take part in the Virtual Baby course. Four senior members from the Hub are doing their 'V awards, one young person has just gained 100 hours and two others have completed fifty hours volunteering. The Hub has been working with young people around differences and similarities in Cultures. Nine young people visited China Town in Liverpool to celebrate Chinese New Year. In partnership with the outreach team, 35 young people had a meal in a Greek restaurant. Here the young people learnt about Greek culture, tasting traditional food, learning key phrases in Greek and taking part in dancing and smashing plates. The Hub is about to start a joint project with the Fire Service, the Wirral Fire Cadets programme. The Fire Cadets programme will run every Thursday evening and will offer young people the chance to gain new skills whilst working towards a BTEC Level 2.

- 5.2. North/West Wallasey Outreach Team worked with a group of young people who placed a bid for positive activities in the West Wallasey area. These activities have been focused around delivering diversionary work and signposting within the parks and open spaces around the district, including Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie. The team has been working in close partnership with Sports Development, Response, Parks and Open Spaces, Youth Respect Team and the Police on Friday nights in Harrison Park. Here the Kontactabus has been used to provide a venue to deliver harm reduction advice and guidance workshops. In addition, games, hot chocolate and toast have been used to help engage 40 -70 young people. During half term, two Oaklands residentials were organised for 19 young people from Leasowe and Moreton Youth Clubs. The week long residential was supported by a local Police Community Support Officer. This involvement enabled the development of relationships with the young people and the Police and explored attitudes to crime and personal moral choices.
- 5.2. South/East Wallasey Outreach Team celebrated Chinese New Year by taking a group of young people to Liverpool City Centre to gain an insight in to the Chinese culture and celebrate Chinese New Year. Young people viewed the celebrations and participated in a quiz which encouraged them to learn more about Chinese culture, after which they enjoyed a Chinese style buffet where they learnt to use chop sticks. In partnership with Oldershaw School, the team are involved in a Positive Opportunities for Progression (POP) project. This project is a 12 week programme which aims to engage young people at risk of exclusion and raise aspirations. The team has also engaged young people in various activities including football, fishing, team building and the opportunity to gain an Asdan Qualification.
- 5.3. Belvidere Youth Club provides a range of youth club facilities for young people with additional needs. Activities in the club include table tennis, pool, snooker and video games. Recently discussion groups and workshops have taken place which has provided advice and guidance around issues such as bullying, drugs and alcohol and health and relationships. Over the past few months young people have been busy producing a newsletter. The unit has just received their Silver Award in Health Promoting Youth Units.
- 5.4. Moreton Youth Club offers a range of activities which include sports such as football, netball, basketball, pool, table tennis and snooker. Recently young people have been taking part in workshops on digital photography, cookery, painting, arts and crafts, MCing and music editing. The Club is also running film nights for young people.
- 5.5.. Leasowe Youth Club. Due to vacancies the Club is having some difficulties with low staff numbers. As a result the team has been working closely with the local outreach team. In February there was a trip to Oaklands which was supported by the outreach team and local police.
- 6.0. **Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts (WYT)**
 - 6.1 Improvements to WYT's new home, which was the old Gilbrook School, are now well underway and are due to be completed by the end of April. The school has been renamed Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and will be officially launched by the Mayor in June.
 - 6.2 Since their successful tour of Somebody's Son, the Last Minute Peer Education Theatre Company have performed two short plays and facilitated workshops at conferences in Oldham and Chorley Hospitals commissioned by the North West Society of Doctors. These are now regular commissions and provide health professionals with an opportunity to improve their awareness around the specific health needs of young people.
 - 6.3 The current members of the Voltage music volunteering training course have now started their Open College Northwest accreditation in Peer Education and will complete their first

module by the end of April. Another 30 young people have also achieved their 50 hours V Award.

- 6.4 In addition to the four nights of dance provision currently provided by the dance team, WYT have also facilitated a number of projects and workshops in schools including health days at St Anselms College and South Wirral High School. Funded by the District Activity Fund, the dance team is also working in Wallasey Youth Hub and in Grange Baptist Youth Club on Saturday evenings. These groups will be performing at the launch of Pilgrim Street Arts Centre in June.
- 6.5 Young men from the Contembreak dance crew successfully delivered a workshop day at Thorncross Category D Prison. The request came via the prison Dance Development Worker as a result of WYT's reputation for work undertaken using dance as a motivational tool with harder to reach young men. The WYT group worked with ten young men from the prison with the aim of developing the effectiveness of the dance work already undertaken and to promote dance as a potential further education and career option.
- 6.6 'Voltage' is part of V - the National Volunteering Programme and WYT has been selected as one of five projects across England to run the scheme and represent the North West. The current and last cohort of Voltage trainees have attended a residential at Trafford Hall and worked towards designing a workshop to promote volunteering to be taken into schools and youth units. In addition to this, the Volunteers are now putting their learning into practice by working within a range of music projects currently facilitated by WYT. The Voltage group also attended a meeting at Merseyside Youth Association to represent young musicians on the Wirral as part of a national consultation process facilitated by Youth Music on 'why music should be part of the national curriculum'.
- 6.7 Supported by the District Activity Fund and Youth Music WYT are currently running two music projects focussing on beat box, digital composition and band development on Thursday evenings and a Swing vocal class on Wednesday evenings at Pilgrim Street. The Thursday groups will perform at the launch of Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and the vocal group will also be performing at the Mayor Making Ceremony in May.
- 6.8 Young people from all the music projects attended a trip to the Picket in Liverpool to see young people perform at the City Sounds Gig, which has now inspired them to organise their own gig in the near future. As the funding from the National Foundation for Youth Music is now coming to an end, WYT will be submitting a new funding application to Youth Music to enable this highly successful work to continue to develop and to encompass a range of partner organisations.
- 6.9 The in - house drama session at Pilgrim Street now sees at least 40 members at each session and they are currently working towards the launch of the venue in June. In addition to this session WYT are also providing opportunities for young people to develop their skills in script and stand up work. The group are now working on a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery to put on a large scale performance at Eastham Country Park in the Summer of 2012.
- 6.10 WYT continues to run an ongoing programme of Saturday dance and drama sessions for young people who are 'looked after' to help develop their skills and self esteem. This group performed at Wallasey Town Hall in January at their presentation ceremony. WYT are also working in partnership with SCS Kinder to run a 'Glee Choir' for young people who are 'looked after' or leaving care. This will begin with a ten week project in May based at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre.
- 6.11 WYT is working with the Education Psychology Service to deliver participative dance and drama activities as a way to enable pupils to express themselves and find ways to deal with stress and gain self and mutual respect. The project was piloted with Rock Ferry

High School and has worked successfully in St Pauls Primary supported by WYT peer educators. The programme has now rolled out to Gilbrook, Kilgarth and Rockferry schools.

- 6.12 WYT are facilitating a new project funded by Aiming High for Disabled Children on Friday evenings at Pilgrim Street. These sessions follow the same model as the Meadowside/ Foxfield school sessions that are run on Friday mornings and will include one hour of drama and one hour of dance. These sessions are assisted by the peer educators and will run through to July.

7.0 Response

- 7.1 Over the three month period from January to March there were 102 new referrals into the Counselling Team, the source of these referrals are from schools, Response staff, Youth Offending Service, CAMHS, Social Care, Parents, local hostels etc. A total of 70 individuals have used the service and 329 sessions have been delivered. There are currently 54 young people on the waiting list which, at present, is twelve weeks long. The Counselling Team have provided information workshops about the services offered at Response and have arranged rapid support at a number of schools. One was a school with a number of pupils who were distressed due to the death of one of their peers. Issues young people present with, are family breakdown or lack of communication within the family, loss/bereavement, issues from the past, bullying, problems at school, anger, low confidence and self esteem, substance related issues, self harm etc. Young people presenting with suicidal ideation/attempts remains to be a concern for the service.
- 7.2 Health Services in Schools continues to develop and the new additional services that have recently been commissioned by the PCT will strengthen the provision. These new services include smoking cessation, contraception and mental health and well being. The service is attracting many young people into the clinics to talk about health matters and concerns or worries that affect them.
- 7.3 District Activity Fund - Response are still continuing to provide sessions up to the end of March. The Youth Hubs remain to be the source of provision for support on information advice and guidance. Contacts have amounted to 926 this quarter. Awareness raising on a number of issues has also taken place, including National No Smoking Day.
- 7.4 The outreach drug and alcohol team have delivered brief interventions to young people who engage in alcohol misuse and associated risk taking behaviours in the parks on a Friday and Saturday evening. Through this work, the team have identified a number of concerns around the safety of young people
- 7.5 Response continues to work in partnership with Wirral Brook in educating young people across the Wirral in the form of Bitesize events, street work and developmental group work with target groups. Street work and developmental group work has seen outreach teams including Response, wider Youth Service and Brook working closely to reduce young people's risk taking behaviour and empower personal safety. Response continues to work in partnership with the hospital Accident and Emergency Department with parents and their young people who are admitted due to alcohol misuse. The team, who are working Friday and Saturday evenings, have also built relationships with Accident and Emergency staff to promote the referral pathway.
- 7.6 The YPAIP project has encouraged young people who would not normally access service to attend Response for an alcohol education/intervention session via the Youth Offending Service Triage. Young people who are referred through Triage do so as part of their bail conditions. The outcomes for the young person include not being criminalised or fined and they are supported into further appropriate services if required, e.g. counselling. At the end of this quarter the current YPAIP worker will be leaving this position, this will have an impact on service until the vacancy is filled.

7.7 Since January the General Housing team has continued to support young people from all parts of the Borough, in tackling their housing/homelessness issues. Some of the underlying issues have been family breakdown, parental alcohol/substance misuse, domestic violence, bereavement within the family and behavioural/mental health issues. Staff are working with partners inside and outside Response to tackle the above issues in a co-ordinated approach. Every young person who is 16/17 is now assessed using the Common Assessment Framework whenever a multi professional response is required.

7.8 The Housing Team is in the process of co-ordinating a multi agency initiative with a wide range of partner organisations across the Borough to facilitate preventing homelessness workshops in schools. The focus of the project is to review, update and promote a homeless prevention workshop to be delivered in secondary schools across Wirral by a multi agency team. The purpose of the proposal is to deliver a consistent workshop message to young people and school staff to prevent and reduce youth homelessness in the Borough. A multi-agency approach is being proposed to enable pooling of limited financial and staffing resources across organisations to produce a significant outcome in terms of overall youth homelessness prevention.

7.9 The Stop Gap project has just received Council commitment to extend the funding of the project on a longer term basis, this will enable this valuable service to homeless and vulnerable young people to continue. The project offers intensive support to 50 vulnerable 16/17 year olds per annum to avoid homelessness and or rough sleeping. Targets for the last 12 months have been met and service users have recently met with a monitoring officer to tell of their experiences of being supported by Stop Gap.

8.0 **Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)**

8.1 Over the past few months, delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Wirral has been widened in its approach. Several local organisations who are involved in the development and training of young people have recognised the advantages of the scheme and have applied to run the DofE under the Authority's operating licence. This will hopefully result in engagement with young people from faith groups, apprenticeship schemes, Fire and Rescue Service Cadets and a local junior rugby team.

8.2 The development of DofE delivery from the Youth Hubs is encouraging. Each Hub now has at least one dedicated Award evening and a number of staff who are capable of providing an exciting DofE programme. Many young people are now well advanced in their particular level and are looking forward to completing their expeditions this summer.

8.3 In the first quarter of this year 21 young people from Wirral have achieved their Gold Awards and will subsequently be invited to St James's Palace to receive their certificates from HRH Prince Phillip.

9.0 **Training and Staff Development**

9.1 Three members of the team delivering the NVQ programme were accepted for Voluntary Severance/Early Voluntary Retirement. Therefore, negotiations have taken place with Wirral Metropolitan College who are now facilitating the current programme to ensure the existing candidates gain their awards. Officers are continuing to explore how youth worker qualifications can be delivered once the partnership with Wirral Metropolitan College has finished.

10.0 **Youth Participation**

10.1 In recent months young people have been involved in a number of consultation events, including:

- 10 young people who took part in the Park and Open Spaces consultation.

- 13 young people who attended a consultation event about recycling in Wirral, alongside the Older People's Parliament,

10.2 In addition to involvement in consultations, 12 young people from across the Service have been acting as a Reference Group for the Early Intervention Grant Commissioning Process.

10.3 The four District Youth Forums are being revitalised to link more to other district consultative mechanisms and be more relevant to young people and their needs.

10.0 **Play Service**

10.1 Community Play Rangers provided by Wirral Play Council finished the winter indoors programme in March 2011. The summer programme begins in April 2011 and increases to 30 sessions each week across the borough. New sessions have been introduced into the programme including Spital, Ilchester Square - Birkenhead, Birkenhead Park, Torr Park - Eastham, Duck Pond Lane - Oxtton, Whiteheath Park - Leasowe, Flynn's Piece - Wallasey Village.

10.2 Play Practitioner's Project, 'Play Point' sessions now operate from Bebington Youth Club, Eastham Youth Hub, Overton Community Centre, Woodchurch Community Centre and Birkenhead Youth Hub.

10.3 Play workers have attended regional meetings in Knowsley and Manchester with other playworkers from the North-West to share skills. Wirral Play Council have also provided a training day for playworkers, early years workers and after-school clubs.

10.4 The Play For All project has supported several children, enabling them to attend regular play sessions. After a consultation with children, 'Play for All' purchased some equipment based on competitive sports, e.g. table tennis, archery, netball, and gym equipment. Children were excited to compete against each other in both the team games and the one to one competitive activities. This helped to engage with a percentage of children referred to 'Play for All' who were uninterested in engaging with using the existing equipment.

10.5 The Year 2 Revised PlayBuilder Programme - An announcement in July 2010 meant the year 2 programme was put on hold until further notice with the directive that any new contractual liabilities were not to be incurred. The programme had to be suspended until the revised Play capital grant was confirmed and re-allocated. The programme was restarted at the end of October 2010. The Department for Education announced Wirral's revised allocation of £373,990.63 to cover expenditure already incurred, contractual commitments and as affordable, to support some other valued projects already identified in Wirral's year 2 programme.

10.6 Consultation work was finalised between children, young people and residents. A number of year 2 play areas have been completed including Birkenhead Park, Whiteheath Park, Leasowe, Torr Park, Eastham, Whitfield Common, Heswall, Port Causeway, Bromborough, Warwick Park, Upton and Higher Bebington Park. Further play areas will be completed in the next few months. The majority are split sites catering for each age group which was highlighted in the play audit and subsequent consultation exercises.

10.7 Beechwood play scheme has been developing an art project inspired by photographer 'Rankin'. Children had their portrait taken, these were then blown up to A3 size in black and white and given back to the child to creatively alter them. Twenty children participated and used any media available to alter their portrait. They used a variety of materials including pens, paints, chalk, photocopier and computer graphics. The finished portraits showed an insight into each child's individual personality and are now on display in the playscheme. After consultation with the children the art room was used as a 'sit off'

space over the winter months. This enabled children to have a safe space to just come and hang out with minimal adult intervention during the darker winter months and join in activities. As a direct result the numbers of children attending increased, averaging 50 per night.

- 10.9 Charing Cross playscheme continues to provide an inclusive play session on Monday evenings promoted in conjunction with the Play For All lottery project. This provides additional support for local children to attend and participate in play activities.
- 10.10 Gautby Road has been fund raising for their annual residential to Oaklands in the Summer. They hope to take 30 children and young people to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities.

11.0. Other Developments

- 11.1 A report has been presented to Cabinet regarding the principle of developing a 'super centre' for young people at Birkenhead Fire Station. Elected members have identified some capital within this year's budget to support this initiative. A representative steering group has been formed to look at taking this initiative forward.
- 11.2. Rampworx are continuing to identify funding streams to build an indoor skate park provision on land in Bidston which Cabinet has agreed be reserved for this development. Rampworx are working in close partnership with the local authority and are also key partners in the Birkenhead project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the report.

Lindsay Davidson
Principal Manager, Youth & Play Service