

WIRRAL COUNCIL

YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 28 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

HEAD OF UNIVERSAL YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0. General Service Update/Staff Movements

- 1.1. In late September and early October, a series of staggered closures of youth and play units were undertaken to enable essential training for play workers and youth workers across the Universal Youth Support Service. Across the two week period, 47 sessions were made available to staff, some compulsory and some optional. Compulsory sessions for all line managers included HR, Health and Safety, Performance Management, Managing Resources and Safeguarding. Following the conclusion of the training, a full set of revised procedures for the Service were issued to staff effective from 1 November 2012; workers had previously been consulted on the content of these.
- 1.2 The Mersey International Youth Exchange Programme, led by the Universal Youth Support Service in partnership with the Hong Kong Commission and Pine Court and Cosmopolitan Housing Associations, saw its successful conclusion. The Programme which was supported by Liverpool City Council saw a delegation of young people from Hong Kong visit Merseyside in July. In October young people from Wirral and Liverpool visited China (photograph below). The opportunity provided an insight into each country's culture, heritage and family life. The exchange had a theme of 'Quality of Life' which enabled young people to consider and reflect upon their own lives, the issues young people face in today's society, the similarities and differences between us, the support that is available to young people to address these issues, and, inform their education, and the contrast in the provision each country offers young people.



- 1.3 On 30 June 2012, funded through the Early Intervention Grant and supported by registered charity Involve North-West, the Service ran Youthfest 2012 at Birkenhead Park. This music festival for young people saw eight of the best young bands the borough has to offer perform. The event was sponsored by Fallen Industries, a recording and rehearsal studio in Upton, who offered a prize to the winning band on the day that included rehearsal time and recording time with Michael Johnson (engineer for New Order, Joy Division, Stone Roses, Pink Floyd and Kraftwerk). The

winner, Undiscovered Society (photograph below), was also given the opportunity to play at Astral Coast, a one-day festival at Floral Pavilion to be run by Bido Lito! Magazine later in July 2012. The judging panel included reporters from both the Wirral Globe and Wirral News.



Area Team reports

2.0. South Wirral and Birkenhead Districts

Birkenhead District

- 2.1. Birkenhead Youth Hub has organised regular theme nights on Friday evenings. These have included a Neon Dance night, Jubilee party, and a Euro football night. An average of 80 young people have been attending the Friday sessions. During this period other projects have included a fitness programme, basic cookery and a workshop on homophobia. A 'chill out' room particularly for girls has been established. Recently the Hub hosted a sports event for Wirral Change, welcoming a wide range of ethnic minority groups to the facility.
- 2.2. Birkenhead Youth Outreach Team has worked in partnership with Viking Youth Club, Grange Baptist Youth Club and other key partners ensuring a consistent district youth offer. During Operation Banger the team delivered diversionary activities on Mischief and Bonfire Nights. Weekend sessions have been co-ordinated with the Borough-wide Youth Outreach Team, focussing on reducing anti-social behaviour and other risk taking behaviours. Young people have gained recorded outcomes from Sex Relationship Education workshops. Staff encouraged young people across Birkenhead to contribute to the 'What Really Matters' consultation exercise and supported them in the completion of the survey.
- 2.3. Charing Cross Youth Club has supported the Stronger Communities Youth Engagement Team which was in operation for six months (see below); this included hosting a BBQ to support the initiative. Eight young people are taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Young people have taken part in issue based work including bullying, hate crime and relationship abuse. Young people attended a Wirral Youth Theatre production about relationship abuse. Other topics covered were teenage pregnancy and risk taking behaviour around alcohol. Youth club and playscheme members enjoyed a cultural evening as part of their Civic Award, 'Learning about other organisations on Wirral'. They invited the Mockbeggar Ladies Morris Dance Troop to visit the Monday night club. Young people learnt about the history of the troop and joined in some of the dances. Young people were awarded

Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) money to purchase First Aid and Food Hygiene training awards.

- 2.4. Young people from Viking Youth Club took part in various sports ranging from football to short tennis and theme nights were held during the Olympics. Young people took part in creative cookery sessions, making fresh pizzas and designing and creating various fruit smoothies. The Heritage project ran throughout the summer in partnership with the Youth Federation. Young people researched life sixty years ago by interviewing and filming “What did young people do then? Where did they go? What anti-social behaviour did they get up to?”. The project commemorated the Queen’s Jubilee. The club also held an intergenerational party during the Jubilee weekend for the community, including face painting, games, fire engine, police, cakes and a barbeque.
- 2.5. The Stronger Communities Youth Engagement Team concluded its work at the end of September 2012. The Integrated Youth Support Service, of which the Universal Youth Support Service is part, had secured short-term funding to deliver an intensive youth engagement project in the Stronger Communities Initiative area (Birkenhead). The team delivered five targeted evening outreach deployments per week (6pm-10pm), school holiday activities and youth participation in community development. The team engaged with 228 young people, made seven referrals into Challenge & Support and the Youth Inclusion Project, as well as supporting youngsters to join Birkenhead Youth Club. Staff provided a number of training sessions on drugs and alcohol awareness, both as part of their activity programmes and through ‘on the spot’ street interventions. Within this six month period a 37% reduction of anti-social behaviour was recorded by Merseyside Police. Birkenhead Outreach Team are continuing ongoing links with young people in this part of Birkenhead.
- 2.6. Grange Baptist Youth Club has offered an open door policy supporting young people to have a safe place to meet. Staff have engaged young people in discussions regarding substance misuse. Discussions have also taken place around independent living and supported housing. The Olympics offered the opportunity to talk about the benefits of sport and healthy lifestyles.
- 2.7. The Callister Youth Club recently held an open night and four new members have joined. The new arts and crafts room is operational following a grant from the Aiming High team. Young people have been learning basic signing to increase their skills enabling deaf young people to participate with their peers more fully.

South Wirral

- 2.8. South Wirral Youth Hub has delivered workshops for young people around sun, waterways and sea safety, exam support, stress busting and smoking cessation. Young people have also benefited from sessions around relationships and sexual health, alcohol and peer pressure. Hub members hosted an evening of participation and hotpot supper for the young people visiting from Hong Kong as part of the Mersey International Youth Exchange Programme. Also French students on study visits enjoyed using the Hub during the summer offering Wirral young people an international perspective. The Queen’s Jubilee and the Olympics offered further opportunity for celebration with sports and international foods.

- 2.9. South Wirral Youth Outreach Team continue to deliver the accredited Escape Programme, in partnership with Merseyside Police, offering drug and alcohol awareness to young people referred through the Challenge & Support project. A young women's group received Youth Opportunities Funding (YOF) for their project, RANT (Relationship Abuse - Not Today). They are developing resources in various formats to raise other young women's awareness around relationship abuse. The team is co-ordinating its work with the Police, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service and Borough Wide Youth Outreach Team challenging anti-social behaviour in hot spot areas of New Ferry and Bebington.
- 2.10. Bebington Youth Club has created the 'Girls' Room', supported by other young people participating in the National Citizen Scheme. Building on this success, the entrance hall into the club has been painted and the young people have continued with an outdoor clean up project outside the club. Young people are forming a 5-a-side football team to organise matches with other clubs. Halloween night was celebrated with apples on strings, treasure hunt and then buffet food to finish. The club members got into the spirit of things by dressing up, as did staff. The usual club activities have continued throughout, with sport and arts and craft being popular. Christmas is now on young people's minds, so plans for the Christmas party are underway.

3.0. **Wallasey and West Wirral Districts**

West Wirral District

- 3.1. West Wirral Youth Hub has seen an increase of young people over the summer. 22 young people have completed Duke of Edinburgh's Award from Bronze to Gold. Sixteen young people have achieved ASDAN short course awards for sport during the summer. Following requests from Hub members' parents it is planned to deliver a parental information session around alcohol and substance misuse in partnership with Response and the local neighbourhood police team.
- 3.2. West Wirral Youth Outreach Team supported and delivered a range of diversionary activities using a coordinated approach sharing resources with the police, voluntary sector, community groups and schools. Sports Nights funded by EIG are delivered in partnership with the Sports Development Unit at Pensby High School and West Kirby Concourse. During the summer the team has been involved in various initiatives challenging the consequences of anti-social behaviour including risk taking behaviour. Substance misuse workshops were delivered to over 500 pupils with the police in Woodchurch High School. Young people were successful in their Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) bid encouraging young people to have a voice in their community and participate in self organised activities, including decision making choices.
- 3.3. Greasby Youth Club is now based in the Pavilion at Coronation Park, Greasby. The club has been working with new groups of young people building relationships and identifying needs. Young people have taken part in local consultations about the development of a skate facility in Coronation Park led by Greasby Outdoor Activity and Leisure Group.
- 3.4. Fender Youth Club is now operational on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Young people have participated in a range of positive activities including sexual health workshops to learning how to bake. The young people who are

attending the club come from diverse backgrounds and it has been encouraging to see how the groups have bonded and worked together during specific workshops.

Wallasey District

- 3.5. Wallasey Youth Hub has been involved in various projects and activities. The Hub supported three young bands who went on to perform Youthfest 2012; organised a 100 days of peace campaign promoting peace in the run up to the Olympics; organised and facilitated a community charity day raising over £200 for Claire House and led music projects resulting in six young people completing their ASDAN awards, as well taking part in structured workshops around alcohol and sexual health.
- 3.6. Wallasey Youth Outreach Team has enabled many young people from the District to engage in ASDAN accredited awards, including a Healthy Eating Project at Wallasey Hub. The Web Editor for TeenWirral tutored a group of young reporters on writing press articles and are awaiting photography training to further their reporting skills and qualifications. The Team has also partnered other agencies such as Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service and Catch 22 to promote positive, diversionary activities reducing anti-social behaviour in hotspot areas. The team also continues to provide sporting sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings with workers from the Council's Sports Development Unit at Harrison Park and the caged area on Brighton Street, Wallasey. Partnership work with Terrence Higgins Trust has also supported a group of gay young men who are now engaging in a weekly peer education project.
- 3.7. Leasowe Youth House (Youth Club) has delivered healthy cooking workshops where young people learnt about fat content and how to make quick healthy snacks. Young people have also been involved in some of the activities at the Wallasey Youth Hub. A group of young people successfully bid for Youth Opportunity Funding (YOF) to finance future trips to Oaklands and other locations. They also bid for accreditation materials, computer games and internet access. Young people's effort in creating the bid was rewarded with a positive activity. Existing members are also creating a mural at the club welcoming new members and giving positive messages about contemporary issues.
- 3.8. Belvidere Youth Club visited Wirral Youth Theatre to see the 'If You Loved Me You Would' presentation. Young people also participated in the Wirral Coastal Walk. To celebrate the Queen's Jubilee they held a barbeque for members old and new. Young people also made ceramic mosaics commemorating the Youth Federation's 60th Birthday. The summer programme theme was the Olympics with quizzes, sports and activities. Young people also enjoyed trips out such as Birkenhead Park to see Peter Pan and Ellesmere Port Boat Museum. They attended the Floral Pavilion for the 'Your Future, Your Choice Conference'. In October they held a Halloween fancy dress party as a celebration for achieving the 'Gold Health Promoting Youth Club Award in Emotional Health'.
- 3.9. Moreton Youth Club took part in art and design work promoting the centre within the community. For the Queen's Jubilee young people took part in discussions around the royal family. Young people also decorated the club and held a Jubilee party with food, fun and games. During the summer staff provided careers advice to young people. Five young men applied to and attended HQ Sports coaching programme. Staff also assisted young people to draft CVs and discussed interview techniques.

Young people were also encouraged to apply for some of the Wirral Apprenticeships on offer. The team has successfully helped one member gain a joinery apprenticeship and two young men achieve places at Wirral Metropolitan College on construction courses.

- 3.10. St Mary's Youth Club has been on eight expeditions in the Yorkshire Dales and Snowdonia as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programme. There are currently just over 200 young people involved, with 90 young people at Gold level. The Tuesday Special Needs Club has a Wirral-wide catchment and has continued to grow with a membership of 130, which includes twenty-three helpers, aged 13 to 19. In addition to the regular provision of disco, football, pool, table tennis and video games, three sessions have been delivered enabling helpers to learn sign language. The club is offering a program involving young people in learning about autism, epilepsy and substance misuse.

Borough-wide Youth Outreach Team

- 3.11. Borough-wide Youth Outreach Team has been focused in three main hot spot areas identified by the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Governance Group; Larch Road, Tranmere; Mersey Park, Tranmere and New Ferry/Bebington. As part of challenging negative behaviour, group work has encouraged and promoted positive citizenship and positive behaviour such as litter picking. Young people have explored moral choices, harm reduction, avoiding risk taking behaviour, relationships and sexual health. Young people are regularly informed about local youth facilities, with support offered to attend if needed. Partnership work with the District Outreach Teams, Youth Clubs and Hubs, Police, Anti Social Behaviour Team and other services has been a core part of the team's role.

4.0. Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts (WYT)

- 4.1. WYT continues to deliver work for the second year of the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) alongside a number of external funded projects. Ten weekly sessions of drama, dance, music, technical theatre and visual arts sessions are provided over five days at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. Alongside this, a number of outreach projects are running in Youth Hubs, Youth clubs, Schools and with Voluntary Youth Groups across Wirral. Over the eighteen months of EIG funded projects, WYT has worked directly with 872 young people who have all achieved recorded outcomes through their participation in youth arts.
- 4.2. A 'Summer Dance School' provided four weeks of dance workshops in the school holidays consisting of three sessions in a day. Participants experienced street, urban, break-dance, contemporary, cultural and musical theatre dance styles. These sessions enabled young people to build hard dance skills as well as soft social development and self awareness skills. The take up for this was between 30-50 young people per session.
- 4.3. Barnardos Young Carers project commissioned WYT to run three days of performing arts activities in the October half term involving 25 children and young people which culminated in a performance for families. This was funded by Children In Need.
- 4.4. Also in the October half term, the NHS commissioned WYT to facilitated three days for their 'Health Champions' project working with young people at risk. For this, three

drama pieces were produced looking health and well-being and used as a stimulus for discussion workshops.

- 4.5. Dance work with young men is particularly strong with specific projects being developed which enable them to build their skills as well as improve their knowledge particularly around their risk taking behaviour. At the end of the school term in July, WYT facilitated a week long male dance event with seventy young men attending from Mosslands, South Wirral, Hilbre, Woodchurch, Foxfield, Oldershaw and St Mary's school. The young men worked together towards a performance at the end of the week and were supported and mentored by WYT's team of male peer educators.
- 4.6. The EIG programme has also provided an opportunity for young people from Wirral to promote their achievements at a local and regional level through a range of projects that culminated in high profile performances. The dance and vocal swing projects performed at Weatherhead School 'BIG DANCE & BIG SING' event over the two evenings. Fifty young people from WYT also performed alongside another nine hundred and fifty young people from across the North West as part of the Big Dance Cultural Olympiad in Liverpool One.
- 4.7. WYT was also responsible for setting up and managing the community stage at Birkenhead Park for the Olympic Torch event. WYT Peer Educators ran workshops during the day for schools and community groups.
- 4.8. A new visual arts project culminated in a photographic exhibition entitled New Elements which was launched at new Pilgrim Street Arts Centre Gallery and subsequently toured to the Floral Pavilion and FACT in Liverpool reaching an audience of over five thousand.
- 4.9. The 13-19 years drama group have again devised and performed a production for the Claire House fundraising Halloween Walk at Birkenhead Park. The piece called 'The Witch Who Lost Her Cackle' was designed for children and performed to over 150 children and their families in the rain and the wind but still received great reviews.
- 4.10. The 'Pacific Swing' vocal group continue to be in demand and performed at Parr Street Studios in Liverpool and at Albert Dock as part of Juice FM's Celebration of Singing Festival.
- 4.11. Our 'Red Carpet' film projects have so far produced two films and one with Wallasey Youth Hub is at the editing stage. The completed films have been made with Bebington High School about the transition from primary to high school and the other is a short promotion film for the 'DIG IT' young people's project in Bromborough.
- 4.12. Specific project work continues with young people with disabilities and as a result there is a high level of integration into the general provision. A new project called LIKEU Dance Company has been launched which involves ten young disabled people 16 -19 who meet weekly and have already performed at Pilgrim Street. The aim is to develop their skills to a high level and support them to tour and work with other disabled and non disabled groups and schools across Wirral.

- 4.13. 'Last Minute Theatre Company' is now recruiting for a new cast for the highly acclaimed production 'If You Loved Me You Would' which explores abusive teenage relationships. This was performed to over 500 young people in May at the main theatre space in Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and will be rolled out again early next year.
- 4.14. The Inclusion Dance Company facilitated workshops and performed at the Youth Voice Conference and consulted with young people about the issues to be explored in their next Youth Hub tour.
- 4.15. The Contembreak young men's dance company have developed a new piece called 'PACK' which explores gang mentality and will tour youth projects and schools across Wirral in the New Year.
- 4.16. WYT has worked in partnership with and received funding from Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation to facilitate a new pilot project called 'KIDSTIME'. This is monthly project for families affected by parental mental illness. The scheme has been running successfully in London for a number of years and this is the first pilot to run in the North West. WYT is facilitating the children's workshop and the adult group is facilitated by Adult Mental Health Service. The project aims to educate the children and young people about mental illness in a creative way and enable families to be more open about the impact that mental illness has on the family unit. The sessions take place at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre on the first Thursday of each month and eight families attended the first session in November.

5.0 Response

Housing Service

- 5.1. Between May and October 2012 the housing team within Response saw 100 new unique individuals attend for housing advice, guidance and support. The team made 693 one-to-one contacts with young people, which included preventative work and mediation to support young people to remain at home.
- 5.2. The housing team supported 65 young people to remain/return to the family home and/or stay with extended family or friends. 28 young people were relieved of their homelessness into supported accommodation including hostels, lodgings and smaller intensive placements. 4 young people were supported into their own tenancy with tailored support and 3 young people received looked after care. In addition, the team has reached around a further 500 young people through the 'Wake Up Call' project, delivering preventing homelessness workshops in schools.
- 5.3. A designated Social Worker for homeless young people aged 16/17 years has been appointed within Social Care to support this work. The Social Worker, who is based within the Leaving Care Team, works closely with the housing team in Response to carry out an Initial Assessment of the young person once homelessness has been established. This assessment takes place whilst the young person is placed within appropriate emergency accommodation. Response continues to support young people that are placed in emergency accommodation (if needed) until appropriate accommodation is found. This ensures that the young person's basic needs are met and helps them to feel stable and positive about the future.

- 5.4. Response also continues to operate a daily drop-in service for young people who present as homeless and work hard to support a young person to return home, provided it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- 5.5. A young woman who Response has supported since she had just turned 16 years old and presented as homeless, has recently documented part of her experience and requested that it be shared:

“Response is a well-known organisation that has been helping young people for years. They don’t just offer one form of support, they offer security and a person to talk to about your personal issues and is completely confidential. Response have helped thousands of people and without their help I know from personal experience, things would have been different and I would not know what I would be doing now.

I was kicked out of my home and was referred to Response who put me in a supported lodgings placement where I stayed for 7 months. Within those months Response visited me through their Outreach team to ensure I was ok and helped me get my money sorted out, gave me food vouchers and a bursary for clothes. Response also offered me emotional support through counselling with their counselling team, which really helped me a lot. When I had to move out of the placement Response put me in one of their stop gap flats where I am still now. My support worker helps me with managing my bills and getting the right food in a weekly shop where she comes with me. Workers come to the flat once a week to ensure everything is going right and I am able to cope with things. Without Response’s help I would not be able to have any of these things and I would be frightened about the future. Response also offer drug and alcohol abuse support or advice for whom ever needs it. Response and their staff are very welcoming and supportive and when you walk into their centre they all say hi, and offer you drinks. Their friendliness is non-ending and you always feel happy in their presence.”

Counselling team

- 5.6. 80 new young people have attended for assessments this period. Sources of referrals include self-referrals; parents; Youth Offending Service; Health Services in Schools; schools; colleges and mentors, local hostels; Wirral Supported Lodgings; local training agencies; GPs; Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) and Barnardos. 36 of the young people seen disclosed that they had felt suicidal prior to accessing counselling. 25 of these had actually attempted suicide prior to the assessment and 17 of these still had suicidal ideation.
- 5.7. A total of 612 counselling sessions were delivered to young people between May and October 2012. There are currently 33 young people on the waiting list, which has been reduced through the operation of drop-in sessions. Referrals have however increased now that the summer holidays are over and schools have re-opened and are identifying issues requiring support, which also includes poor attendance.
- 5.8. The counsellors continue to support schools and colleges in response to serious incidents/crises; this support has been welcomed by both staff and students.

Drug & Alcohol Team

- 5.9. The drug and alcohol team continues to reach contractual obligations and are engaged in key areas of work which support vulnerable young people. The service continues to support work at Arrowe Park Hospital, targeted street work in hot spot locations, StaySafe operations with the Police, school drug education prevention work, campaign work, training , Child in Need/TAC and one-to-one work with young people.
- 5.10. The *Alcohol. Alright?* programme is currently recruiting three new cohorts of front-line practitioners. In addition, Alcohol Champions have been recruited to assist with the sustainability of the work. A new product is being designed to support parents.

6.0 Duke of Edinburgh's Award

- 6.1. The number of units delivering the Award under Wirral Council's operating licence has increased to 40. This accounts for about 2,060 Wirral young people who are currently registered with the authority and participating in DofE Programmes at all 3 levels (bronze, silver and gold).
- 6.2. Since the beginning of the summer, 22 of these young people have successfully completed their Gold Award and have/will receive their Award at St. James's Palace.
- 6.3. A successful expedition season saw in excess of 300 participants complete an expedition or adventurous project, which was even more challenging owing to the inclement summer. Thanks must go to the large number of youth workers, teachers and volunteers who made the expedition season a success.
- 6.4. Two members of staff have now successfully completed their Royal Yachting Association helmsman certificate. Consequently, due to strong links with Birkenhead YMCA's narrowboat project, there are opportunities for young people to complete their residential project (for the DofE Programme) on board a vessel and/or for young people with mobility problems to complete a canal based expedition.
- 6.5. Overall, DofE continues to be a popular choice for young people who wish to develop their own leisure time activities, whilst at the same time achieving a well recognised accreditation.

7.0 Training and Staff Development

- 7.1. In September UYSS underwent a two week training programme. All workers, including managers, had the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills including updates about UYSS policies and procedures. There were also optional training sessions aimed to increase the workers knowledge and practical skills on: safeguarding, early intervention/identification, drugs and alcohol, mental health etc. The feedback from those who attended has been extremely positive and the evaluation report is in progress. Plans to continue short courses to more of the workforce will continue as part of the UYSS ongoing professional development plan.
- 7.2. Training on Participation and Engagement was delivered to the Elected Members. The purpose of the training was to identify barriers to effective

engagement and challenge perceptions of young people. The feedback from the elected members was positive.

- 7.3. The Children's Work Force Development Strategy Group has been meeting regularly and one of the actions has been to develop and implement a full service Training Needs Analysis using both an electronic and paper survey. The survey has been approved by the Children's Trust and has been distributed across the workforce, including to UYSS staff.

8.0. **Participation**

- 8.1. Youth Opportunity Fund – the young people's grant panel have now allocated this year's entire fund. All applications that met the essential criteria and attended a presentation were awarded money. A broad variety of providers have been funded from both the Local Authority and Voluntary sectors; all of which will enhance the Youth Offer to young people across Wirral.
- 8.2. Youth Voice Conference – approximately 90 young people from 16 of Wirral Secondary schools took part in the annual event. The workshops and Hot Seaters were to issues/concerns raised by young people at their local Youth Forums. The Market Place was packed to capacity with 27 local agencies displaying what they did and how to access services. The feedback was positive from the young people, school teachers and facilitators and there has been a substantial amount of young people who have expressed an interest in further participation.
- 8.3. Youth Parliament – the motions presented by the young people in the council chamber sparked much debate. The local councillors made reference to the quality standard by which the motions had been researched and presented. A special thanks and acknowledgement was given by the Mayor to the young people and organisers of the event.
- 8.4. District Youth Forums – young people have been consulted on the changes to how their Youth Forums are delivered to encourage participation and engagement, this has resulted in the development of a Participation Calendar. This calendar has all the Forum dates and venues among other key participation events. The Forum dates have been advertised on Teen Wirral in advance to allow planning and preparation for young people and workers.

9.0 **Play Service**

Beechwood

- 9.1. A 'Celebrity style' challenge was staged using healthy foods to encourage over 30 children to try different food stuffs from around the globe. These included Kiwi Fruits, Star Fruit, Cus cus, mango etc. These led to discussions with children regarding the health value of different foods.
- 9.2. Children were encouraged to travel to and from the play scheme in small groups, as part of a safety initiative. Local Community Support Officers gave advice to children to promote staying safe.

- 9.3. During the Summer children participated in plaster casting, mask making, painting, den building, photography and face painting. There was also a large outside art project with material fixed to the outside wall and painted by over 50 children. They had the opportunity to use and experience new techniques and artistic materials. Children enjoyed the opportunity to safely make a mess and explore new outcomes. They also took part in cleaning up process afterwards.
- 9.4. Children participated in planting flower beds outside the local shops, in conjunction with estate management board.
- 9.5. Many children were involved in this years Halloween celebration, from their first ideas to the final construction of the installation. The sports hall was converted into a Spooky 'Halloween Hospital' using a variety of different materials and building techniques. Children were proud to show their parents around the Haunted Hospital and show what they had helped to achieve. Over 280 people attended this years Halloween celebration. This was made possible with help and contributions, from the staff, children, local community, police and other local agencies all donating either time, effort, monies or materials to the project. This popular community event had a good deal of positive feedback from the local community.
- 9.6. Children were also encouraged to participate in the large community event held on the estate. There were discussions regarding 'Penny for the Guy' and 'Trick or Treating' and how to keep themselves safe.

Charing Cross

- 9.7. Children completed a survey and made a model for the safer communities and Methodist Housing depicting how they would like to use the local green space on Craven Street. Top of the wish list was a skate board park, the consultation findings were put on display and on their website.
- 9.8. Children, with the support of staff, completed the 'What really matters survey'. Group work was carried out in small groups of older children to help them fill out the surveys and talk through the options. The young people learnt the difficulties facing the council.
- 9.9. Children from the play scheme were invited to the youth club to meet the Mockbegger Morris dance troop to learn about traditional culture. This also met some of tasks on the Civic Award scheme. In July, 12 children were presented with their award by The Mayor of Wirral. Two children spoke about their experiences at the awards. It provided a great opportunity to raise children's self esteem to be congratulated in front of their parents.
- 9.10. Children enjoyed the Halloween fun decorating the play scheme, playing with Wanda The Witch and making skeletons out of card and split pins. There was a late party on November 1st with such memorable games as dress the mummy and find the monsters' brains (in a bowl of cold spaghetti!) as well as the usual duck apples.
- 9.11. The Summer Programme included children attending the Play Day in Birkenhead Park, getting up on stage at the music tent, climbing the spider wall and playing in the straw bales tent. They also visited Chester Zoo and participated in a Barbecue party organised by the Safer Communities Initiative.

Livingstone Street

- 9.12. During the summer children attended numerous day trips. Some of the trips involved using public transport and travelling on foot. Therefore, before setting off, the children were reminded of the importance of road safety. By reiterating the importance of road safety to the children when crossing busy roads and adhering to the Green Cross Code it also reminds the older children who sometimes think they are 'too big' to wait for the green man to flash and too look both ways. Staff also explained to the older children that by crossing the roads correctly they would be setting an example to the younger children.
- 9.13. The children enjoyed taking part in planned activities through out the summer. They participated in visits to the Cinema, Under Water Street, Apple Jacks and Camelot. Each week the children took part in activities themed around the day trips. For example when the children went to Under Water Street, the weeks activities were themed around water. They played water themed games, used marbling inks, made jewellery out of shells and made egg box sea monsters. When the children went to Apple Jacks, the week was based on being active and eating healthy, appropriate to the children's age range and abilities. The children had healthy cooking sessions, and took part in Zumba, bleep tests and the Mini Olympics. The children made their own winners medals and Olympic ribbons, took part in events and tournaments. Children also contributed making equipment for the 'events' and took charge of timing events etc. Involvement like this encourages the children to take charge of activities with out relying on staff to lead the activity. It also enables the children to make decisions and work together in teams.

Gautby Road

- 9.14. This year different themes were planned for each week of the Summer. These included the Olympics, Kings and Queens, Jungle, Space, Junk and Healthy Eating. Children designed and made a fantastic wall mural for the Olympics. They also participated in their own mini-Olympics which included events such as high jump, long jump and relay races. The children also designed their own Olympic torches and were really interested in how their country was getting on in the medals table. These activities were popular with the children who enjoyed cheering on team GB.

Children explored the jungle theme by producing different masks based on animals and reptiles. They also created their own snakes and ladders boards and dice. The children enjoyed making 3D planets and rockets using paper mache for a wall mural. They enjoyed the freedom to experiment with paint and get messy, as well as finding the facts on each planet. In August 32 children visited Apple Jacks Farm, Warrington and, despite the rain, really enjoyed the opportunity to try out new activities. A trip to Gulliver's World enabled 27 children to enjoy a trip to a theme park not normally available to them. The children also joined in the Play Day annual celebrations at Birkenhead Park. They also benefited from the experience of walking as group to and from the event. This enabled them to learn more about the geography of their area and helps to develop their independence and resilience. A group of 32 children also visited Chester Zoo the weather was fabulous and the children enjoyed seeing all the animals even though there were a few in tears in the bat cave.

The staff and children delivered leaflets at the end of summer fun day to promote

the Loan Shark week campaign and the local fun day. A fabulous fun day was organised and over 100 children and parents attended from the local community. There were free activities including a disco, face painting, barbecue, bouncy castle and inflatable football pitch. 'Sharky' the loan shark came to visit and had pictures taken with the children. There was a rap class for the children who learnt how to rap and the Olympic torch dropped in for a visit so the children could carry it and view it more closely. Overall, it was a great way to conclude the summer activities.

In September, a pilot scheme was set up by the Wirral Credit Union to enable children to set up a savings account. Children contribute 50p or a little more each week and they use the money to purchase things which are important to them. This also helps them to budget and learn the importance and value of money.

9.15 Leasowe

Halloween was celebrated with a party attended by 120 children. The children designed and produced their own decorations. They participated in traditional Halloween activities. The community firework display and bonfire was provided in partnership with Parks and Countryside. The dry and clear weather conditions meant the event was attended by some 2,000 local residents and children from Leasowe and the surrounding areas. The play staff organised activities and refreshments, as well as co-ordinating the fire work display.

Even though the nights have become darker, children still play outside. Staff have been raising awareness with children how to keep themselves safe either on the play ground or within the local community. The children requested torches to help them feel safer. They have incorporated them into a game of torch tick, which enables them to participate in a physical activity in the dark whilst feeling safe.

Leasowe continues to be regularly used by the local primary school in the daytime, as a reward and an opportunity to socially interact with peers in a different environment. Children have also been involved in healthy eating activities to help them understand what is good to eat and how small changes can make their diet healthier. Each weekend they have a healthy breakfast which demonstrates this, with the children involved in the preparation and cooking.

BIG Lottery Programme

- 9.16. Over the last three and half years the portfolio has been positively received and welcomed by children & young people and the local communities. It provided an invaluable insight into the play needs of children and families, in terms of delivering play provision in Wirral. It engaged with children and families in decisions about the design and delivery of play spaces and addressed issues to target areas deprived of play opportunities. A flexible approach was adopted to account for seasonal variations i.e. change of venues and times during school holidays, alternative Winter programmes. This approach has earned positive feedback from parents and grandparents and in particular low income families.
- 9.17. Duration the lifetime of the portfolio it has helped to raise the profile of play with Councillors, service providers (Surestart, Looked after Children) and local residents. The portfolio was the result of a play audit that led to implementation of the Wirral Play

Strategy overseen by the Wirral Play Partnership. The Partnership worked with other significant agencies to develop projects and improve access to play, i.e. Aiming High for Disabled Children, School co-ordinators, Friends of Park groups.

- 9.18. The projects developed good relations and trust with children and their local communities, developing stewardship, community involvement and recognition that children need safe places to play in their locality.
- 9.19. The process of consultation with children and communities provided essential information on the delivery and development of local projects, i.e. where to deliver the play sessions, what children like to do during play sessions and what could improve their play experience. The projects were child centred and the number of participants increased during the life of the programme.
- 9.20. The portfolio target which was achieved during the second year. This did not slowdown the drive to attract more potential beneficiaries to the projects. The programme timetable and access to play activities were delivered until the end of the portfolio to maximise the benefits to children, enabling them to engage in new play experiences.
- 9.21. Overall, the portfolio improved the levels of physical activity, self confidence, independence and creative skills of all those who engaged. This encouraged the children to play out, increased parental confidence in allowing their children to engage in free play activities, which also helped improve children's participation in physical activity. It also provided respite for parents who had children with disability or additional needs.
- 9.22. The portfolio remains a legacy that continues to stimulate community involvement, volunteering and participation.
- 9.23. Over the duration of the programme's three and half years, the three projects engaged with 6,754 individual children providing stimulating and challenging play experiences. Play sessions were delivered across Wirral in areas of inadequate play provision, including meeting the demands of local communities and recognising through consultation children's desire to play outdoors with support of adults.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the report.

Lindsay Davidson
Head of Universal Youth Support Service