

Introduction

The Positive Contribution Strategy Group has representation from Health, Wirral DAAT, The Voluntary Community and Faith Sector, Integrated Youth Support (Targeted and Universal) the Children and Young People's Department (Children's Social Care and Learning and Achievement). Meetings are held bi-monthly and the focus of these meetings is to monitor progress by group members in implementing the Positive Contribution section of the Children's Plan. The meetings also provide an opportunity the strategy group to identify emerging issues and discuss any impact on the work linked to the strategy group. An example of this has been the development of the use of Triage by the police to assess young people involved in anti social behaviour with the aim of identifying other interventions to reduce the number of young people who are referred to the Youth Justice System.

The work of the Outcome area is broad and ranges from formal interventions as undertaken by the Youth Offending Service to informal interventions such as helping young people to be involved in the decision making process at Pupil Panels or at Youth Forum meetings. The work of the group is balanced between ensuring that targeted interventions enable vulnerable and at risk young people to move on to more universal developmental activities and maximise the opportunities presented by positive activities such as those funded by the Early Intervention Grant.

Overview

Key recent achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young people full members of the commissioning panel for Priority Area Three of Children's Services Commissioning.• Young people have been reporting their successes on Teen Wirral and challenging the negative perspective of young people.• Young people set the priorities for the allocation of the Youth opportunity Fund.• Young people decided on the allocation of the Youth opportunity Fund.• Approximately 2156 children have participated in a range of positive play opportunities including Short Breaks for disabled children.• The use of Triage by the Youth Offending Service is contributing to young people not entering the Youth Justice System.• The use of Restorative Justice with young people involved in anti-social behaviour has reduced the number of triages that have had to be used.• 1228 Alcohol Alright! Interventions were delivered to young people and which contributed to 529 young people reporting an increased awareness of the dangers of alcohol.• 22 young people including some from the children in Care Council (CiCC) took part in take over day and shadowed the Council Leader, Directors and staff from partner organisations.• Young people from the CiCC interviewed the Children's Minister regarding support for care leavers who wish to go to Further and Higher education
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Key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the balance in the work of the strategy group between targeted statutory interventions and universal open access opportunities for young people to engage in the decision making process. • Identifying the contribution of services to ensuring tangible outcomes for young people.
Key challenges ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In light of the current economic climate, the provision of such a wide range of opportunities for young people is not assured for the future. The challenge will be to identify a sustainable approach to enable children and young people to make a positive contribution. The focus of any future Positive Contribution will be on ensuring that we maximise the opportunities presented by existing engagement mechanisms through which young people can influence decision making. The strategy will focus on the activities presented through following mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Voice Conference • Youth Parliament • “You’re Welcome” Peer Assessors • Peer Educators commissioned by the DAAT • Area Youth Forum • School’s Councils • Maintaining partnership working in a period of competing priorities. • Maintaining the balance in the work of the strategy group between targeted statutory interventions and universal open access positive activities. • Ensuring young people from both priority and non priority groups have opportunities to be effective in the decision making process. • Increased involvement by schools in the wider youth engagement agenda.
Risks to outcome delivery and proposed actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressures on existing resources to meet competing priorities. • Proposed to reduce the number of priorities • Priorities for Positive Contribution are not relevant to partners and delivery of the work is at risk. • Identify group partners after the priority (ies) have been identified. • Schools may not be able to be actively involved in the youth engagement planning process. • Proposed action is to ensure that early deadlines are set and schools continue to be informed of arrangements for the youth engagement agenda.
Areas requiring further partnership involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to increase participation in Youth parliament. • Partners’ response to the budget challenge. Are there areas where we can avoid duplication?
Equalities impact assessment areas for development and progress made	<p>Progress has been made in involving young people from minority groups in the decision making process. This has been made possible due to the increase by young people from minority groups in the commissioned activities. There has been an increase in the number of young people from vulnerable groups taking part in the commissioned activities. This is still an area for development and formalised in next year’s plan.</p>

Areas for promotion /publicity / communication / engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of young people who attended the 2012 Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament and used the opportunity to present debates on a range of issues that affected young people. • Young people who attended the Youth Voice Conference and reported back to the police their concerns about personal safety. • The work of the Children’s Involvement Service which organised a meeting for young people who are in care to meet with the Children’s Minister. • The work of Wirral Involvement School’s Council which has enabled more young people with Learning Disabilities and Difficulties to take part in mystery shopping • The Alcohol Alright! Programme which has been developed in response to the views of young people and which is enabling more young people to make positive life choices.
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Areas for Reporting Focus

This year the work has focused on a number of areas which have included the effective implementation of the Integrated Youth Support Strategy. This has resulted in more effective and co-ordinated service delivery. This has resulted in fewer young people entering the Youth Justice System as First Time Entrants. This work has influenced the commissioning priorities which have resulted in two service areas being commissioned, Youth Challenge Targeted Support and Youth Challenge Universal Youth Support. The providers of both service areas will be required to address local priorities and issues ensuring that young people progress to positive activities and there is a reduction in anti social behaviour.

The Children’s Services Commissioning provided young people with the opportunity to influence decision making. Three young people were **full members of the commissioning panel** for Priority Area Three, **Risk taking Behaviour in Children and Young People**. In addition to this young people have acted as commissioners for the allocation of the Youth Opportunity Fund and set the commissioning priorities and subsequently allocated the funding.

The Alcohol Alright Programme was commissioned to address Risk taking Behaviour in children and young people. This has been particularly successful in engaging with young people and challenging their understanding of alcohol misuse. This programme has in one quarter engaged from July to November with 900 young people from vulnerable and at risk groups. Young people as a result of the intervention are able to critically assess the implications of their alcohol use. This has led to the development of an assessment tool for parents to use with their children and on themselves. This approach is innovative as youth workers in universal settings have been able to help young people take positive action to address negative behaviour. Previously this work was seen as specialist and only deliverable in clinical settings.

Case studies

Included are case studies from the Alcohol Alright Programme, the Children in Care Council and the Artsmark Project. The case study from the Alcohol Alright Programme includes quotes from young people, parents and other professionals. All case studies reflect how services have been planned to address needs in young people and enable them to make a positive contribution. They have been selected as they demonstrate how a planned approach will address individual needs and also show the breadth of the positive contribution agenda. The work of the Children in care Council (CiCC) this year has been particularly successful with its involvement in Take Over Day and also the trip to London when the CiCC were able to interview the Children’s Minister Edward Timpson. The Artsmark case study reflects the work of the youth theatre in enabling young people to make a positive contribution both from their own participation but also in their work with younger children.

Case Study 'A'

Alcohol Alright Case Study

Referral received for 14 Year old young woman from Health Services in Schools (HSIS).

Young Person is using alcohol to excess most weekends and has previously been admitted to A&E because of overdose of alcohol.

After completing initial paperwork in our first session, we moved onto an alcohol awareness session. The Alcohol Alright Quiz was used to open debate and raise points with the young woman around her alcohol use. The tool was easy to use for both myself and the young person, and allowed us to speak about the young persons alcohol use with the answers she had ticked on the quiz.

It helped me as a worker to identify that this young person often vomits and doesn't remember parts of the night. We discussed overdose and the dangers of this. We continued the session focussing on personal safety and what happens to the body when alcohol is used to excess. The young woman was totally stunned and agreed that looking to reduce her alcohol use would benefit her. The young woman felt that cessation was not an option so we looked at how to reduce the risks when drinking. Although we didn't fill in the green leaflet about changing drinking habit's (as it is a bit comprehensive for a 14 year old) we used it as a guide for looking at reasons to reduce, positives and negatives to reducing etc.

We finished the session by looking at the grey leaflet about how to look after a friend. The young woman found this really easy to read and understand.

When I asked if she felt she could now look after someone who had overdosed she replied 'yes, some of my friends drink too much and this could happen to them, I'd know what to do now!' I have used the alcohol alright grey leaflet in a variety of settings from A&E to Schools and it has always received a very positive reaction. Some of the comments I have received are listed below!

- 'This leaflet will help me to look after my boyfriend when he drinks, he sometimes has too much and I don't usually know what to do'
Young Woman Age 16
- 'The leaflet is clear and could save someone's life'
Nurse at A&E
- 'Some of the things in the "don't do" section I thought you should do so I've learnt something new!'
Young Woman Age 14
- 'I can give this leaflet to my son (age 15) and he won't think I'm nagging as it's not about his drinking, but how he can look after someone else! Maybe you should do a parents guide to drinking?'
Parent of 15 Year Old

Case Study B The Work of the Children in Care Council

Briefing on the Visit to London by the Children in Care Council (CiCC)

Our Children in Care Council meets once per month to represent views of children in care through policy, consultations, recruitment and selection of social care staff, contributions to discussions around budgets, changes to the way Wirral does things...CiCC is open to all young people who are in Care on the Wirral who are 13+.

We try to represent the voices of children in care on Wirral locally, regionally and nationally.

The young people wanted to see how national democracy works in action through a visit to Westminster and to present some of the things that have been discussed by the CiCC to the Children's Minister Edward Timpson at the Department for Education. 13 Young People accompanied by staff travelled to London on the 23rd November. As part of the theme of governance, they visited the Tower of London in the afternoon.

In the morning there was a tour of Westminster and the Houses of Commons, before heading over the Department for Education to meet with Edward Timpson. The group put their questions across to the minister and were provided with written feedback after the meeting. This information was reported back to other young people in the tri annual newsletter sent to all looked after young people in the care of Wirral between 5 and 18.

Case Study C The Artsmark Plus Project at Wirral Youth Theatre

ARTSMART PLUS (FUNDED BY THE EARLY INTERVENTION GRANT)

AIMS

ARTSMART PLUS aims to provide vulnerable and at risk young people aged 13- 19, including those who are looked after with:

- *a small group and one-to one training process - where they can learn a range of peer education and personal development skills*
- *practice and develop these skills in a volunteering role – including the provision for looked after children aged 8-13 years.*
- *gain accreditation via the Arts Award scheme.*

PROCESS

The process involves a mix of paper based exercises, group work, physical work, computer based research and one to one tutorials. From this, young people gain personal and social skills such as confidence, self esteem, communication, listening, empathy and responsibility. They also develop planning, time management, reading, writing, IT and research skills.

OUTCOMES

Through this process we have been able to identify and respond to issues regarding emotional, personal and educational needs of over twenty participants. In addition to this, young people involved have developed and influenced others, whilst having positive outcomes for themselves through the support and opportunities offered by the project. All participants are encouraged to make a positive contribution as a Peer Educator and outcomes for young people range from securing a place at University to running a small group work project with their peers or younger children.

CASE

STUDIES

BC is involved in a TAC process and came to the project with very low self esteem, was self harming and with a poor attendance record at school. The project has enabled her to explore and develop coping strategies for dealing with family conflicts and improving her self esteem by focussing on her abilities to support and work with other young people. BC now volunteers as a Peer Educator on several projects including an after school dance provision in her own school. BC is hearing and visually impaired and has developed a particular skill and empathy for working with young people with disabilities which has helped her to feel more positive about herself and her abilities. The team have continued to attend the TAC meetings at school and provided positive reports on her achievement. Workers have also raised areas of concern for BC that have been missed by other professionals involved. Her school attendance and grades have improved and she is able to recognise her progression and aspirations.

EM is looked after and has progressed from the ARTSMART 8 – 12 yrs group to become a Peer Educator as part of ARTSMART PLUS. He has ADHD and at times has challenging behaviour. The role of the Peer Educator is progression route integral to the work of WYT and many young people aspire to this role. EM asked to be a Peer Educator and is part of the current ARTSMART cohort. As a result, he is developing confidence and leadership skills, holding better focus and demonstrates more positive behaviours for most of the time. Each participant is supported to set their own project to undertake with a group and EM is working on stereotypes and bullying for his as issues that he feels strongly about.

BH is a young man with Down's syndrome. ARTSMART PLUS has provided him with the opportunity to develop his communication and cognitive skills by enabling him to describe tasks and create movement, which in turn, helps him to develop confidence when leading and supporting groups. BM will be part of a group of young people with disabilities that will be working in a range of settings as Peer Educators and as positive role models for other young people with disabilities.

Brief SWOT Analysis of the Outcome Area

Strengths	Weaknesses:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Multi-agency approaches to enabling young people to have better outcomes.2. Different needs of young people are represented in strategy group.3. Engagement agenda is shared across partners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Not always able to have tangible outcomes2. Not all groups are represented in strategy group.3. Focus of Strategy is too broad4. Too many priorities
Opportunities:	Threats:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish shared priorities to maximise opportunities for children and young people.2. Focus on the rationale for targeted and universal activities3. Understanding of other partner's constraints.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Budget pressures across the partnership will reduce resource available.2. Capacity of partners involved to deliver against the expectations of partners.3. Positive Contribution is not a statutory duty and can be vulnerable to change in priorities.

Summary

This year the focus has been on the impact of services and programmes as in the development of the Integrated Youth Support service and the Alcohol Alright programme. It is important that we understand what interventions work well and make a difference. In the Positive Contribution Strategy Group There is a shared understanding of the need to balance the targeted and universal opportunities and the contribution both make to helping young people make progress in their personal circumstances.

Young people are becoming more involved in decision making as in the commissioning panel for the Early Intervention grant. Young People's involvement in decision making is impacting on the decision making process. It is in the area of decision making and young people's involvement that will be the proposed focus of this group in 2013-16. Given the current economic challenges facing services, it is important that young people can be actively involved to ensure services and policies are relevant to the needs of young people. It is in this area that there is still scope for improvement. The Positive Contribution Strategy Group will focus its work on further developing opportunities whereby young people can be involved in the decision making and make a difference. Within this agenda the challenge for next year is to ensure that performance targets are relevant to all partners and identified work areas are achievable and impact is demonstrated.

Recommendations:

That Wirral Children's Trust note the Report

Report Author:

Name: Maureen Mc Daid
Title: Principal Manager

Contact:

Phone: 666 4508
Email: maureenmcdaid@wirral.gov.uk

Appendices: None