

WIRRAL COUNCIL

YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 29 MAY 2013

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

HEAD OF UNIVERSAL YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0. General Service Update/Staff Movements

- 1.2 A new specialist project has been funded by Wirral Young Person's Commissioning Group to work with young women (aged 13-19) who are on the edge of criminality, exclusion and/or at risk of exploitation to reduce their substance and alcohol misuse. Focus is also being given to reducing participants' risk taking and anti-social behaviour; strengthening their resilience to peer pressure and abusive relationships (particularly focusing on substance misuse, relationships and sexual health) and raising aspirations in relation to healthy lifestyles and informed choices. The project is being co-ordinated by the Universal Youth Support Service and additional specialist training has been provided to the all female workers selected to participate, who are also acting as positive role models.
- 1.3 The self-titled GIRLS (Gorgeous-Inspirational-Respectful-Loyal-Sisters) Project consists of seven groups of up to ten young women working through a bespoke twelve week programme, operated across Youth Hubs, Youth Outreach Teams, Wirral Youth Theatre, Sports Development Unit and Youth Offending Service. The young people have been referred by a variety of services and agencies and all have completed a STAR assessment to monitor and assess their distance travelled. Each of the groups is meeting on a weekly basis; supplemented by developmental group work residentials bringing them together to develop team building and re-enforce messages and learning. A 'Big Sister Diary Room' is collecting the young women's ongoing reflections and will culminate in a 'red carpet' celebration event at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre for them to demonstrate and celebrate the learning gained from their individual journeys.

Area Team reports

2.0. South Wirral and Birkenhead Districts

Birkenhead District

- 2.1. Birkenhead Youth Hub has developed a new soccer league on Monday evenings and the Thursday band nights are becoming popular. The Hub has delivered the 'All Beautiful, All Different' sexual health programme in partnership with Wirral Brook. Young people have taken part in money management workshops with the Youth Federation and undertaken Red Nose Day activities included a fundraising party. Friday nights have drawn in approximately 100 young people.
- 2.2. Birkenhead Youth Outreach Team has worked collectively with the projects across the district to ensure young people have had opportunity to express their views at the Youth Forums. The team has been working with young people on the dangers

associated with binge drinking and utilised an array of resources to support clear consistent messages around personal safety and health. The team has partnered with the Service's Response agency every Friday evening focussing on Birkenhead Park and other hot spot areas of anti-social and risk taking behaviour.

- 2.3. Charing Cross Youth Club members were successful in their Youth Opportunities Fund bid and have now taken part in Food Hygiene, Fire Marshal and First Aid training. Young people have also enjoyed visiting three local restaurants as part of their learning. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programme has been popular and Civic Award 'Young Buddies' are preparing to meet Callister Youth Club members to welcome and encourage them to join Charing Cross Youth Club, when their unit closes (see 2.6 below).
- 2.4 Young people from Viking Youth Club took part in Barclays Money Management skills training where they learned about budgeting, finance and debt. Young people also undertook First Aid training and studied Chinese New Year. Weekly sports nights have enabled young people to experience different sports with a qualified coach. Club members gave up their Friday night to organise a party for Children in Need; organising food, making cakes, face painting and playing games. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the local authority withdrew support from this unit on 30 April 2013. The unit's final night of operation was 25 April 2013 at which an event took place to celebrate the relationships built and the start of something new. Viking Centre Management Committee is maintaining youth provision at the Centre after this date.
- 2.5 Grange Baptist Youth Club ceased operation in December 2012 following the retirement of the Church's Reverend.
- 2.6 The newer members at Callister Youth Club have enjoyed activities such as sports, iPad activities, quizzes, Wii games, craft and socialising. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the local authority will be withdrawing support from this unit on 14 May 2013. The unit's final night of operation will be 9 May 2013. Staff have spent time preparing young people and visits are underway to other units for taster sessions. A moving on party is also planned as part of the exit strategy to help young people adapt to the changes facing them.
- 2.7 Cavendish Youth Club has remained closed due to essential health and safety repairs. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the local authority withdrew support from this unit on 12 April 2013.

South Wirral District

- 2.8 South Wirral Youth Hub has delivered many workshops for young people including Cycle Safety; Law and Young People; Drugs and Alcohol; Health and Safety in poor weather; International Women's Day; Women's Health; Money Management; Cannabis & Mental Health and Smoking Cessation. Young people have also enjoyed participating in a recycling project. The Hub is currently piloting a fire simulation and awareness session in partnership with Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

- 2.9 South Wirral Youth Outreach Team continues to deliver a range of activities across the district, including the RANT (Relationship Abuse - Not Today) project and the Escape Programme in partnership with Merseyside Police, providing drug and alcohol awareness to young people referred through the Challenge & Support project. The staff team has regularly supported the well attended football night at the Oval now operated by the Sports Development Unit; engaging with young people by-standing and those participating. The team has been active with partners in engaging with young people and diverting them from anti-social behaviour in the New Ferry, Bebington and Eastham areas in particular.
- 2.10 Young people at Bebington Youth Club have taken part in workshops about Risk and Consequences; Relationships & Sexual Health; Alcohol and Healthy Eating. Club members have enjoyed 'film and cocoa' nights and have taken part in a range of indoor sporting activities. The latest craze in the club is a game invented by South Wirral Hub called Tableton; a hybrid of table tennis and badminton. Young people are honing their skills in readiness for inter-club competitions. Plans are underway for an environmental clean-up outside the club and fundraising activities.

2.11 Wallasey and West Wirral Districts

West Wirral District

- 2.12 The Members' Committee at West Wirral Youth Hub has up to a dozen young people who are keen on planning projects and activities. The committee has met twice and put together a small presentation for the 'Friends of West Wirral Youth Hub'. Staff and young people have been planning projects such as photography, creative media/marketing and tackling domestic violence, together with a table tennis league. The Hub hosted two audition events for 'Tomorrow's Talent', in partnership with registered charity Involve Northwest (funded by the Early Intervention Grant). The winner was a singer songwriter who had auditioned via the Hub. 14 young people have gained Asdan accreditation for physical recreation.
- 2.13 West Wirral Youth Outreach Team has offered young people a warm, dry and safe mobile provision (Kontaktabus) five evenings a week during the colder months. The team has targeted engagement with young people at risk of a being part of 'gang' culture. The team has continued to deliver a range of partnership based sporting activity throughout the week at Pensby, Irby and Woodchurch. Youth Opportunity Fund enabled reward trips following young people's participation. Greasby Pavilion in Coronation Park is now utilised by the team on Thursday evenings, where young people take part in a drop-in and various indoor activities including issue-based information and advice.
- 2.14 Young people at Greasby Youth Club have taken part in alcohol awareness sessions and workshops around relationships and sexual health and keeping safe. Young people have enjoyed arts and craft sessions and taking part in table sports activities. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the local authority will be closing this unit on 10 June 2013. The unit's final night of operation will be 6 June 2013. Young people have been informed of alternative youth provision in the locality.

- 2.15 Young people at Fender Youth Club have enjoyed a varied programme of activities including Thursday night football sessions in partnership with the Sports Development Unit; gender specific sexual health group work; work around alcohol misuse and budgeting for the Youth Opportunity Fund project. A trip to Alton Towers was arranged to improve community cohesion through joining with other youth units. Staff are delivering an ongoing Healthy Eating programme, encouraging young people to broaden their culinary skills and tastes. The programme is also focusing on reducing young people's daily intake of fat and sugar.

Wallasey District

- 2.16 Wallasey Youth Hub has undertaken a project which included a display for Holocaust Memorial Day. The Hub hosted a sexual health course delivered by Wirral Brook incorporating relationships and self-esteem; participants will gain an accreditation. The Hub's project themes for the coming quarter include Deaf Awareness Week; cannabis awareness; diabetes; refugees; alcohol awareness and sexual health.
- 2.17 Wallasey Youth Outreach Team has supported the Young Reporters project to cover a number of stories in the local community, with technical training for the young people due to start imminently. Staff have delivered Sexual Health training using the Kontactabus. Saturday nights at Central Park have seen open access sporting activity, in partnership with the Sports Development Unit, creating positive activities for hard to engage young people. The Escape Programme is now being delivered in this district and the cohort of young people attend weekly, working towards an accreditation. The course has encouraged the group to look at their own substance misuse and consider the impact that substance misuse can have on society. Other issues covered by the team include community pride, eco-friendly fishing, healthy eating and growing food.
- 2.18 Leasowe Youth House (Youth Club) has delivered a range issue based workshops around alcohol, smoking, relationships/sexual health and substance misuse. Football has remained popular and participants have been working on team building skills. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the local authority will be closing this unit on 28 June 2013. The unit's final night of operation will be 27 June 2013. Staff are supporting the young people to embrace the challenge and opportunities of attending alternative youth provision.
- 2.19 Belvidere Youth Club members, the majority of whom have a learning or physical disability, have enjoyed a vast array of activities, including a visit to a pantomime; Winter Pool Competition; Burns Night celebration; calendar making; new wall displays; Chinese New Year celebration; artwork; Shrove Tuesday pancakes; Valentine's cakes and card making; acrylic painting; alcohol awareness; No Smoking Day activity and volunteering in the tuck shop. Young people have also enjoyed making sweets for Mothers' Day, Easter craft and baking. Issue based workshops have also taken place around substance misuse. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the local authority will be withdrawing support from the unit on 17 June 2013. The unit's final night of operation will be 13 June 2013; however the Belvidere Management Committee has committed to continue to operate a voluntary run youth club after this date.

- 2.20 Moreton Youth Club has been running multi-sports sessions in partnership with the Sports Development Unit on a Tuesday evening. Young people have taken part in a sexual health workshop, personal safety quiz and careers workshop including looking at apprenticeship opportunities. They have built links with West Wirral Youth Hub by participating in football competitions and through this young people have started attending the Hub independently.
- 2.21 St Mary's Youth Club has undertaken alcohol awareness workshops with its young people and a number have trained as 'senior members'. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the local authority will be withdrawing support from this unit. A youth club is operated two evenings a week; support from which will be withdrawn on 23 May 2013. Two further nights of the unit's operation are dedicated to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programme. The last expedition will take place on 21 July 2013 after which support will be withdrawn from this unit.

Borough-wide Youth Outreach Team

- 2.22 The Borough-wide Youth Outreach Team has focused attention in four hot spot areas identified by the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Governance Group; Larch Road, Tranmere; Mersey Park, Tranmere; New Ferry/Bebington and Birkenhead Park. The team has delivered over 100 workshops around substance misuse, alcohol awareness, relationships and sexual health. Staff have consistently worked with partners to divert young people from anti-social and other risk taking behaviour. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the team ceased operation on 12 April 2013.

3.0. Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts (WYT) – Pilgrim Street Arts Centre

- 3.1. WYT has now completed the second year of projects funded by the Early Intervention Grant (EIG). This has involved ten weekly sessions of drama, dance, music, technical theatre and visual arts sessions provided over five days at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and a number of outreach projects running in Youth Hubs, Youth Clubs and Schools and with voluntary youth groups across Wirral. Over the two years of EIG funded projects, WYT has worked directly with over 1,000 young people involved in a range of projects culminating in over ten public performances including the Olympic Torch event in Birkenhead Park; eight 'Live 'n' Loud' performances at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and two runs of 'If You Loved Me You Would' by the Last Minute Theatre Company for schools and targeted provision.
- 3.2 At the end of last year, three of the young people involved in the current EIG projects were involved in presentations as part of the application process for the Early Intervention Grant 2013/14. The application was successful and the Service will undertake specific work with young people with disabilities from 8–18 years old, as well as nine twelve week intensive programmes in Birkenhead/Tranmere; Leasowe/Moreton East; Seacombe; Bidston/St James and Rock Ferry of the Youth Challenge Programme.
- 3.3 A particular highlight of this period's work was the special 'Live 'n' Loud' event organised in partnership with Wirral Autistic Society for World Autism Awareness Day

which was attended by the Mayor and Mayoress of Wirral and featured performances from the Making Waves Performing Arts projects and WYT. Other highlights from this period are detailed below.

3.4 Peer Education and Intergenerational Projects

3.4.1 'Inclusion Dance' is a Peer Education Dance Company who support and mentor other young people on a wide range of in-house and outreach projects. Since January 2013 they have been working on two projects which will culminate in performances. One project has been undertaken with registered charity British Red Cross (UK) as part of the 'Make Your Move' dance project in which they have choreographed their own piece to be performed in May 2013. They have also been involved with the Generator project organised by registered charity Age UK. Specific intergenerational dance workshops have been held since February working towards creating a piece for the 'Journey through the Ages' event to commemorate the 2013 EU Day of Solidarity between Generations on Monday 29 April at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre.

3.4.2 A new cast of the Last Minute Theatre Company is now ready for the next run of 'If You Loved Me You Would'. This drama production which explores teenage relationship abuse and what is healthy and unhealthy in a relationship is scheduled for April. In February, Wirral Brook delivered three training sessions for the cast looking at gender roles, sexual exploitation, equalisation and the media, positive and risky relationships and scenarios.

3.5 Work with young people with disabilities

3.5.1 WYT currently runs three projects for young people with disabilities; two of these focus on using dance to build confidence and personal and social skills. From these sessions young people are supported to be fully included in mainstream activities at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. An exciting and ground breaking development is the formation of the 'Like U' disability dance company which is made up of older members who are being trained to work as a peer education company. They have already performed at two 'Live 'n' Loud' performances and one of the groups has supported workshops in mainstream and special schools. The other project is a weekly session for children and young people aged 8-13 years with disabilities and their siblings. This project has been funded by Short Breaks and will now continue within the Early Intervention Grant.

3.6 Work with young men

3.6.1 WYT is currently working with 303 young people at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and the gender breakdown is 144 males and 159 females. This balance has been achieved as result of the targeted work with young men which has been promoted through work in schools and other outreach projects. The Theatre currently runs a male only dance session and a peer education dance company called 'Contembreak' and members of these groups helped to host a week of male only dance called 'Machismo 5' in February 2013. This week of workshops enabled other young men from schools and youth groups to explore the negative stereotypes of young men in society. The week culminated in a public performance including additional inputs from Liverpool Community College. Five young men from these projects have now progressed in to University to study dance.

3.7 Work in schools

3.7.1 Work is being undertaken in Bebington High School with pupils who are working towards their Civic Award and in Weatherhead High School with Year 7/8 pupils delivering lunch time and after school dance. The team is also delivering workshops in Foxfield School with pupils aged 16 and over focussing on building confidence, co-ordination and motor memory, communication and self expression through dance. Contembreak male dance company (noted above) will be taking their new performance and workshop package called 'PACK' into schools and other youth settings.

3.8 Work with young people who are 'looked after'

3.8.1 WYT currently provides two projects for young people who are 'looked after' which are funded by Social Care and through the Early Intervention Grant (EIG). Both these sessions take place on Saturdays at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. The 'Saturday All Stars' is a dance and drama workshops for 8–16 year olds and participants are encouraged to explore life issues in a creative and fun way. The 'Artsmart' project was funded by the EIG to work with older 'looked after' children (aged 16+) to provide a level of one-to-one support training to become peer mentors to the younger members. 'Artsmart' participants have been working towards their Silver Arts Award. The 'All Stars' have been looking at bullying and respect issues.

3.9 Partnership work with Wirral NHS

3.9.1 WYT continues to facilitate the 'Kidstime' project which is funded by Wirral NHS and run in partnership with child and adult mental health services. 'Kidstime' provides monthly workshops for families with mental ill health and ten families attend regularly, including sixteen children and young people. Each session looks at a theme related to mental health; the adult mental health team facilitate a separate session with the parents and WYT facilitates a session with the children and young people. The session culminates in a sharing of the learning around the theme. In February 2013 the Head of WYT and two members of the project (a parent and a young person) attended a 'Dragon's Den' style funding process at Clatterbridge Hospital and were successful in securing additional funding which will enable the project to continue until April 2014.

3.9.2 WYT has also delivered five drama inputs and workshops for the 'Health Challenge Champions' scheme on healthy choices with young people at risk. Members of the Last Minute Theatre Company have made a training film commissioned by Wirral NHS for health professionals, which explore the blocks and barriers young people face when seeking advice and support from professionals around sexual health. WYT also hosted a conference for Private Care Homes in February 2013 in partnership with Wirral NHS which focussed on sharing good practice linked to Every Child Matters. WYT provided a performance around good relationships at this event.

3.10 Accreditation

3.10.1 Seven young people are working towards two Open Award Units which are 'Developing own Interpersonal Skills' and 'Understanding Equality and Diversity'. The course contains a variety of workshops including effective communication and

interpersonal skills, assertiveness, stress management as well as working through a range of performance assessment criteria and exploring a range of issues.

3.11 Music development

3.11.1 Young people access opportunities to develop vocal or musicianship skills at the weekly music workshop sessions at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. Several bands have now formed and performed at Live 'n' Loud' gigs and at the O2 Arena and the Picket in this last period. Pacific Swing vocal group has performed at Parr Street Studios and are now involved in a recording project as part of the Capital of Culture's 'Battle of the Atlantic' project.

4.0 Response

4.1 Housing Service

4.1.1 Response is now the gateway for all homeless young people aged 16/17 years. The number of young people accessing the housing service between November 2012 and March 2013 has increased with 104 new individuals presenting during this period. All young people who are homeless receive an initial assessment from the designated social worker within the Pathways Team. 69 of the young people who presented have been supported to return or remain living with their family. A number of young people became 'looked after'. The team has conducted 700 one-to-one sessions with young people during this period.

4.1.2 Young people who present to the housing team at Response are often in crisis and have other underlying complex issues such as substance misuse; risk taking behaviour; anxiety and low mood; self harm; suicide ideation; bereavement and learning disabilities. Response ensures each young person is made to feel welcome and comfortable so the assessment can be undertaken and appropriate support plan put in place. The assessment identifies the needs of the individual and gathers information required to work towards a positive outcome. This often includes communication with the family and other services who are working with individual. The development of the gateway has enabled young people to receive further assessment whilst in interim accommodation, identifying a long term/move on plan for each individual.

4.1.3 The following case studies illustrate positive outcomes for two young people accessing the service:

Case Study 1: Young person (aged 16) was staying away from home following a relationship breakdown with mum and didn't know dad very well. There were issues of self-harm; low confidence and self-esteem; lack of love and belonging; isolation; not in education, training or employment (NEET) and no money. The young person who engaged with Response's housing and counselling teams gained a place at college and was successful in claiming benefits. The young person began to build a relationship with nan and dad (now living with the latter) and planning to return to 6th Form in September 2013.

Case Study 2: Young person (aged 18) previously homeless with multi-complex needs was successfully supported from a LAC lodgings placement into independent living.

The young person is receiving continued practical and emotional support from Response and is engaged with a Leaving Care Worker in the Pathways Team.

4.1.4 In a continued drive to further prevent youth homelessness, the housing team has delivered the 'Wake Up Call' project to approximately 750 young people across 8 Wirral schools. In total, 28 workshops have been delivered and feedback from young people and staff has been very positive.

4.2 Counselling team

4.2.1 Between November 2012 and March 2013, 132 new referrals were made to the counselling team. 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 (CAMHS) and Barnardos. A total of 534 sessions were delivered during this period. There are currently 56 young people on the waiting list, which means there is approximately an eight to ten week wait to see a counsellor. The drop-in is still popular and consideration is being given to expanding this further to help reduce the waiting list. Suicidal ideation and attempted suicide remains a concern for the team and on several occasions contact has had to be made with families and other support services as young people have come to their session in a very low mood.

4.2.2 Below are a number of comments from young people who have been engaged in the counselling service:

"Thank you so much, I am very grateful for how much you have helped me"

"Counselling helps me get things off my chest"

"School Head has noticed a difference"

"After mum died I couldn't talk to dad about how upset I felt because I thought it would upset him, coming to Response has helped me talk, think about and remember mum".

4.2.3 A grandmother (and legal guardian) fed back the following to the counselling team:
"My relationship with my grandson has changed beyond words, we now talk, have fun, he doesn't lose his temper anymore".

4.3 Drug and alcohol teams

4.3.1 The specialist substance misuse team received 40 new referrals during this period of which 28 received a specialist assessment and agreed a care plan. Overall, the team worked with 68 individual young people, 41 males and 27 females. Cannabis is still the most problematic drug of choice for those young people accessing the service.

4.3.2 Primary drug use for young people engaged with the specialist service appears to be gender specific. 80% of young people whom reported cannabis as their primary drug of choice were male. 92% young people whom reported alcohol as their primary drug of choice were female. 71% young people whom reported Mephedrone (MCAT) as their primary drug of choice were females. There has however been no new referrals in this period for young people reporting MCAT as their primary drug of choice.

4.3.3 The team discharged 35 young people from service during this period with 80% successfully completing treatment.

- 4.3.4 The team continues to work with a large number of young people at Team Around the Child (TAC), Child in Need and 'Looked After' status as well as providing support for parents and carers, which is often crucial to the young people completing treatment.
- 4.3.5 1,092 young people have been provided with advice and information via street work and 49 parents provided with support and advice enabling them to understand and support their children in what can be a very difficult period for both. In addition, 120 drug workshops have been delivered to target groups of young people.
- 4.3.6 The majority of the young people seen by Response have reported either a reduction in their drinking or cessation. One young person referred by Arrowe Park Hospital after overdosing on alcohol and self-harming attended several sessions at Response including the counselling service and has not drunk or self-harmed since. 19 workshops around alcohol misuse have been delivered to groups; ranging from vulnerable young people with additional learning needs to St John's Ambulance cadets who are attending festivals and events where young people are misusing alcohol.
- 4.3.7 The workshops have received positive feedback and many of the young people attending felt their knowledge of alcohol was increased through the session; a selection are noted below:
"I learnt a lot from my sessions, and everyone at Response was very friendly which helped encourage me on my first time going and now I go every week"
"This service has helped me learn the dangers about drug and alcohol use. It has also taught me to think before I do anything stupid. This service was fun and taught me a lot".

5.0 Duke of Edinburgh's Award

- 5.1 The number of young people joining the DofE Programme in 2011/12 has increased by 9.5% to 1,086 young people (compared to the previous year 2010/11). This is in part due to the diversity of organisations that have sought to deliver the Award. The numbers of young people gaining awards has decreased slightly by 4.4% but plans are in place to reduce the number of participants who fail to complete their Award
- 5.2 In February 2012, Plessington St. John Catholic College took the decision to offer all Year 10 pupils the opportunity to participate in the Award. As a result and with the support of both the Service and the DofE North West Office, 106 young people were recently presented with their Bronze Awards. In the last three month period, 22 young people have achieved their Gold Awards including 13 from St. Mary's College Youth Club.
- 5.3 Two Academies have recently announced plans to offer the Award to their pupils and have applied to implement this by utilising the local authority's operating licence.
- 5.4 As the 2013 expedition season approaches there will be an increased demand for accredited DofE Assessors. This demand will be met through the delivery of a series of Expedition Accredited Assessor Scheme courses to all units by the Service.
- 5.5 The Open Award Centre is currently supporting over 100 young people through all three levels of the Award. Following the decision made on 5 March 2013 by Wirral

Council regarding the budget for 2013/14, which included the savings recommended by Cabinet, the local authority will be closing this unit after its last expedition with young people on 29 July 2013. Delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme from Youth Hubs and remaining Youth Clubs will be strengthened.

6.0 Training and Staff Development

- 6.1 Three key training courses have been made available to the workforce. Following the identification of young people under the influence of Mephedrone (MCAT - at the time not a controlled drug), it was determined that additional training was needed to equip key workers with more detailed knowledge to support and educate young people around the use of 'legal highs'. These are substances which mimic the effects of drugs such as cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy; as they are synthetically made and due to the speed by which they are produced some are not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act. 'Legal Highs' training considered the complexities of drugs including MCAT, now a Class B drug, and other synthetic cannabinoids; their effect, how they are distributed and dosages
- 6.2 'Love Life' training has also been provided to a number of workers, building upon the successful *Alcohol. Alright?* resource; looking at various relationships, how young people can improve their situations and support services available.
- 6.3 Missing Young People' training has been provided which focused upon the early warning signs of young people who are on the edge, or at risk, of exploitation. Prevention was explored through the training session. A training resource pack was given to the workers who attended to enable them to update and raise awareness of the key messages with their staff teams.

7.0 Participation

- 7.1 A Participation Calendar for 2013-14 has been set following a recommendation made by young people to encourage participation and engagement. This set out the dates for forthcoming Youth Forums. One of the models used for a recent forum has been based on the Area Forum model and was a great success. The panel members, who consisted of elected members, Police and other guests, were invited by the young people who asked them pre-prepared questions.
- 7.2 As part of the consultation for the proposed Wirral Youth Zone, Wirral Youth Theatre peer educators and the Youth Opportunity Funding (YOF) Grant Panel members visited Oldham Youth Zone 'MAHDLO' in March 2013. In early April other young people took part in a follow up Youth Zone consultation activity day in Barnstondale to give thought to what they would like their Youth Zone to look like, identify barriers to access and to consider wider consultation members for the future. The first consultation deadline is the end of April and an update will be provided in the next Head's report.
- 7.3 As part of a 'Take Over Day', the Children In Care Council (CICC) and (YOF) Grant Panel members were supported to undertake work experience with elected members, the Mayor of Wirral, 7 Waves Radio and the Council's Press Office. The purpose of the event was to raise the aspirations primarily amongst 'looked after' children. A

number of CICC young people and YOF Grant Panel members also participated in developing interview questions and participating in the interviews for the Council's Director of Children's Services.

- 7.4 A number of young people were identified and trained to accompany the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) Commissioners with the application and interview process for awarding of the grant.

8.0 Play Service

Beechwood

- 8.1 Children participated in the design and creation of the Christmas grotto as part of the Christmas celebrations and activities. The project needs to be planned well in advance in order to build a safe structure, as it provides a focus for community celebrations. The sports hall was turned into a magical journey from a child's bedroom to Santa Claus' igloo. Over 180 local residents and their children visited the grotto. It was also used by local community groups, schools and the Children's Centres as part of their celebrations.
- 8.2 In January 2013, the children helped to repaint the main activity hall in the community centre. The children chose the colour scheme and it has been transformed into a bright vibrant play space.
- 8.3 Over the Easter break, staff organised various competitions including Easter bonnets, cards and other art activities. The children participated in a survey to express their views about the play scheme. The results were very positive and supportive and the answers were used for a large game of 'Play Scheme Family Fortunes' to round off the Easter celebrations.
- 8.4 Beechwood & Ballantyne Community Housing Association funded a local radio station for three days which involved the participation and involvement of the local community. The radio station was a tremendous success and it was a great opportunity to promote the play scheme and showcase some of the children's talents.
- 8.5 The play scheme continues to offer a space where local children can come together and socialise. Children expressed their views through the 'What Really Matters' survey and they also initiated discussions, expressing their views on topics as diverse as horse safety at the Grand National to improvements to the local play area.

Charing Cross

- 8.6 Predominantly, children attending the Charing Cross play scheme live on the Exmouth Estate which is surrounded by four busy and dangerous roads. As part of a road safety project, the Arrive Alive book (a highway code for young road users) was shared and discussed with the children. It covered ways to keep safe including "Be Safe, Be Seen" and the Green Cross Code. Children also learnt about the importance of not being distracted when using a mobile telephone, especially when crossing roads and being alert to the traffic. In order to increase road safety awareness around the play centre/youth club, particular attention was paid to the crossing at Grange Road outside McDonald's restaurant, as recently there have been several accidents

and is used regularly by the children.

- 8.7 A personal safety project was organised as a joint venture with the youth club. The aims were to introduce the older play scheme children to the youth club and help the 11-year age group to keep themselves safe in the local community. Charing Cross is located close to public houses and a large supermarket which encourages both adults and young people to frequent the area.
- 8.8 The children also learnt how to protect themselves from potential risk and harm. For example, not going home by themselves and travelling with friends and keeping their mobile telephone and other valuables hidden from view. A game was devised called 'Two steps forward, One step back', which explored how children have been injured and how this might have been avoided.
- 8.9 This period the centre has celebrated a number of winter festivals with positive activities and events. These include making Christmas cards and decorations; Martin Luther King Day encompassing the safety project and Australia Day producing boomerangs. The children also acted out the story of St Valentine and as part of Chinese New Year children learnt about the Chinese calendar.

Gautby Road

- 8.10 Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts has been delivering a dance project with up to 20 children who have participated in weekly dance sessions incorporating street, break and contemporary dance. The children have thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and it has increased their confidence and self-esteem. The programme will culminate with the children participating in a show which will be held at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre.
- 8.11 Over the Easter holidays, Incredible Edible delivered a session to 40 children who learnt about food and the value of growing it in the local community. They planted sunflowers, lettuce and beetroot and have regularly attending the scheme after school to water and look after their plants. The children are excited about growing their plants and the next stage where they will replant them into larger pots.

Leasowe Adventure Playground

- 8.12 Leasowe Adventure Playground hosted the community firework display event which is organised in conjunction with the outdoor parks section, but staffed by play workers and volunteers. Over, 2,000 individuals attended which provided a safe environment for local children and young people to experience and celebrate Bonfire Night.
- 8.13 At Christmas, as part of the Unity in the Community event, the children sang as part of the 'Addy Choir' for the local community. Over 80 children enjoyed the celebrations and had hot food and went to see Father Christmas to receive gifts. It was an excellent event which brought the whole community together to celebrate. A Christmas party was also provided free of charge for over 100 children, as Leasowe Community Homes, Play Scheme, Youth Club, Community Association and local pub raised the funds for the event.
- 8.14 Recently, the outdoor play area has been improved, which is used daily by over 50 children. The sand area for the 'space net' has been replenished with new play sand. The popular giant nest swing and aerial runway has been repaired, bringing very

popular pieces of equipment back into service. Two large mobile trolleys of inclusive soft play equipment have been purchased through a grant from Aiming High for Disabled Children.

Registration and Attendances

8.15 The tables below reflect the current registration and attendances from April 2012 to March 2013 for each play scheme.

Total Children Registered Apr 2012 - March 2013							
Centre	Male Under 8	Female Under 8	Total Under 8	Male Over 8	Female Over 8	Total Over 8	Grand Total
Beechwood	24	14	38	73	63	136	174
Charing Cross	60	41	101	22	23	45	146
Gautby Rd.	28	33	61	32	38	70	131
Leasowe APG	35	45	80	61	63	124	204
Livingstone St.	39	38	77	23	27	50	127
Totals	186	171	357	211	214	425	782

Total Playscheme Attendances Apr 2012 - March 2013							
Centre	Male Under 8	Female Under 8	Total Under 8	Male Over 8	Female Over 8	Total Over 8	Grand Total
Beechwood	633	425	1058	2481	2770	5251	6309
Charing Cross	919	430	1349	1789	715	2504	3853
Gautby Rd.	1564	2205	3769	2458	2939	5397	9166
Leasowe APG	1627	1428	3055	7540	5643	13183	16238
Livingstone St.	814	938	1752	683	720	1403	3155
Totals	5557	5426	10983	14951	12787	27738	38721

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the report.

Lindsay Davidson
Head of Universal Youth Support Service