

WIRRAL COUNCIL

YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 28th October 2014

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SENIOR LOCALITY MANAGER - YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 General service update/Staff movements

1.1 **GIRLS Project** - The next G.I.R.L.S. Project, funded by the Public Health Outcomes Fund, commenced in September. The G.I.R.L.S. Project is a specialist project specifically designed to support the most vulnerable and at risk young women aged 13 -19 across Wirral. The project, offers a unique, informal and educational 12 week personal development programme to Wirral young women, which includes a weekend residential at Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre and a 'finale' celebration event.

The overall aims of the project are to:

- Reduce risk taking behaviour including drug and alcohol misuse
- Reduce offending / re-offending and anti-social behaviour
- Increase resilience around peer pressure and harmful relationships
- Improve aspirations and opportunities, particularly regarding healthy lifestyles and making informed choices

1.2.1 **LADS Project** - Building on the success of the G.I.R.L.S. Project, the Youth Support Service began delivering the Lads Project in September. The project is aimed at young men aged between 13-19 years old and is taking place in the four Wirral localities. Each locality project will have up to 14 young men participating in the course. The project has been designed to address a number of issues relevant to young men in today's society, including:

- Drug / alcohol misuse
- Harmful / exploitative relationships
- Criminal / anti-social behaviour
- Raising aspirations and developing resilience

Each of the four groups will take part in an eight week informal education programme aimed at developing young men's awareness and an understanding of the above issues to support them to build confidence, self-esteem and strengthen resilience. Towards the end of the project there will be a residential run from Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre to consolidate what young people have learnt throughout the course. There will also be a focus on building on skills, strategies and aspirations and the young men will work towards setting a personal action plan for the future.

Area team reports

2.0 Wallasey District

- 2.1 **Wallasey Youth Hub** - 20 young people have completed the V-Inspired programme gaining their 10 hours volunteering accreditation for carrying out duties in the Youth Hub. 11 young people have joined the Youth Hub members committee which meet once a month to make decisions on activities and what they would like to see in the Youth Hub. 20 young people have completed a 12 week Virtual Babies course which included sessions around sexual health, alcohol, internet safety and the realities of having a baby. The course finishes with young people taking a virtual baby home for the weekend.
- 2.2 **Wallasey Outreach Team** facilitates open access sessions for hard to reach young people using the Kontaktabus. Youth workers offer brief interventions and support around drug and alcohol use, healthy relationships and sexual health. The team deliver workshops covering breast and testicular cancer. The Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender and Questioning group (LGBTQ) operates on a Monday night. Young people have engaged in a number of different sessions including sexual health, alcohol awareness, LGBT history and gender identity.
- 2.3 **Moreton Youth Club** - Young people have participated in workshops supporting their personal development in sexual health, also Alcohol Alright, anti-bullying sessions and what is anti-social behaviour, delivered by the Youth workers. They also worked in partnership with Response on a substance misuse workshop.

Healthy eating sessions have provided opportunities for young people to experience sampling new fruits and making healthy fruit kebabs. Over the summer five young people participated in the National Citizen Service Project graduating in September. These young people have also engaged in the G.I.R.L.S. project and are active senior members. Sports Development workers have enhanced the sport offer in the youth club and provide regular sessions.

3.0 Birkenhead District

- 3.1 **Birkenhead Youth HUB** - Young people participated in sporting and recreational activities such as football, rounders, badminton, basketball, Tae Kwon-Do, dance and Majorettes. Discussion sessions have focused on media safety, highlighting the dangers of the use of mobile phones and the internet, as well as looking at risk taking behaviour and consequences of their actions. Young People have also had the opportunity to express their views at the District Youth Forum. Partnership work between the Hub and the Youth Federation providing National Citizenship Service (NCS) projects have

benefited young people who have been raising funds for local good causes by organising community fun days.

- 3.2 **Birkenhead Outreach Team** – Outreach Youth Workers work in partnership with Targeted Youth Support agencies including Sports Development, Merseyside Police and Brook to deliver regular Thursday and Friday night diversionary activities. The target areas are identified by the Anti Social Governance Group, analysing local data and observation by Youth Outreach staff. The use of the Kontactabus enables group work to take place, delivering brief interventions addressing and responding to alcohol and drug awareness, relationships and sexual health. The primary focus is to create a safe environment whilst reflecting on risky situations. Young people consider personal safety and harm reducing options available to them through information resources and workshops delivered by Youth Support staff within the boundaries of a negotiated relationship. Young people are also sign posted to other focused main initiatives supported and delivered by Youth Support and partners, e.g. the G.I.R.L.S. and LADS Projects.

The current targeted geographical areas are located in Mersey Park, Charing Cross, Borough Road, Birkenhead Park, Ilchester Square, North Birkenhead, Townfield Close and The Arno, Prenton. The team operates Tuesday to Saturday between 6-10pm. Key to the work is maintaining voluntary relationships with targeted young people in the hot spot areas, supporting young people through the Gateway referral process, working closely with the Intensive Family Intervention Programme (IFIP) and linking up with the Merseyside Police 7 Beats Initiative and the Anti-Social Behaviour Problem Solving Groups.

Special project work includes working in partnership with the Police, Parks and Open Spaces responding to the criminal damage caused in Flaybrick Memorial gardens. A volunteering opportunity for 14 young people was organised to help challenge the negative image of young people and promote their engagement in positive activities. Staff from Birkenhead Youth Outreach Team also utilised the Birkenhead Kontactabus to engage and challenge peer groups of young people who were believed to be responsible for the damage.

- 3.3 **Charing Cross Youth Club** - The club members' committee organised and held a Saturday evening disco. It proved to be an excellent social event. A young person was the DJ who was praised for his professionalism. An unexpected but welcomed older young person with learning difficulties that had become estranged from his family was re-united with his mother at the event. The young people helped with the food and sold raffle tickets raising over £100.

4.0 South Wirral

- 4.1 **South Wirral Youth Hub** - Young people have been engaging in a variety of projects/ activities including the GIRLS project, smoking cessation work, World Cup Fever, drug workshops and music quiz Thursdays. The team manager has been supporting eight young people through the Gateway process either as a lead professional or as part of team around the family meetings. Through this work, five additional young people are regularly engaging in Youth Hub activities.
- 4.2 **South Wirral Outreach Team** has been working in partnership with Response to address anti-social and risk taking behaviour taking place in New Ferry. Issue based youth work using the Kontactabus gave young people the opportunity to access information to help them make healthier lifestyle choices. Youth workers signposted young people to both the locality Youth Hub and Youth Club and other relevant agencies that offer support and information appropriate to their needs.
- 4.3 **Bebington Youth Club** - Young people have redesigned and repainted the Music Room. A G.I.R.L.S Group ran from the youth club providing resources and information to the young women involved. The Wirral Crime Prevention Panel funded a twelve week Boxercise class with the aim to encourage young people to keep fit and have fun.

5.0 West Wirral

- 5.1 **West Wirral Youth Hub** has been offering support to young people who are making the transition to sixth form or college. On Thursdays, with support from Leisure Link, young people with additional needs are accessing the Youth Hub with the aim of supporting them in accessing mainstream provision. Young women took part in a twelve week G.I.R.L.S personal development programme which includes a residential experience.
- 5.2 **West Wirral Outreach Team** offered a range of diversionary activities to over 150 young people this quarter using a coordinated approach to maximise resources, working closely with the Police and voluntary sector. In partnership with Sports Development and Fender Youth Club the team run a sports night targeting young people involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB) on the Woodchurch Estate. Youth workers have encouraged young people to have a voice in their community and participate in self planned activities including decision making choices linked to various consultations.
- 5.3 **Fender Youth Club** has been closed due to a health and safety issue. The team have been using outreach to build relationships with a group of young people that have been causing criminal damage and ASB in the local

community. As a result of young people not taking part in ASB, young people were involved in two trips to reward good behaviour; this was funded by the Police Crime Commissioner Fund.

6.0 Creative Youth Development

- 6.1 **Creative Youth Development** (formerly Wirral Youth Theatre) is currently delivering a range of participative arts projects with targeted groups of young people funded by the Early Intervention Grant. Under the Youth Challenge programme, Creative Youth Development (CYD) has been commissioned to work with 400 young people in specified localities including Tranmere, Birkenhead, Seacombe and Bidston. This target has been exceeded within the first 6 months of the 12 month contract with over 500 young people having participated in a range of arts based projects at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and in locality settings such as St James Centre, Birkenhead Youth Club and Guinea Gap Leisure Centre.
- 6.2 **The Alumni Portrait Exhibition** funded by EIG, celebrated the work of 9 young photographers with specific learning and additional support needs. Building on skills learnt in previous photography projects, they embarked on an ambitious process to photograph and interview over 50 former members of Wirral Youth Theatre (WYT), recording their stories and reflecting the positive influence it has on their journey into adulthood. Rising to the challenge of using a 40 year old film camera, the young photographers improved their technical skills through classroom based study and hands on practical sessions using digital and film cameras and experimenting with different lighting techniques. They received talks from guest speakers and learnt interviewing techniques from a journalist. The exhibition was opened by the Mayor of Wirral at an event at Pilgrim Street in September which involved over 80 past and present members sharing their personal stories about how WYT had influenced their life and career pathways. A presentation pack of 13 postcards has also been produced as a record of the distance travelled by the photographers and the Alumni subjects. The exhibition now has a permanent place at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and a touring version is currently sited at the Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre from where it will move on to a number of venues across Merseyside. The event also celebrated the new name and branding as Creative Youth Development.
- 6.3 **The Last Minute Peer Education Company**, part of CYD, has also been commissioned by the Public Health Outcome Fund to deliver two theatre-in-education packages to Wirral schools. One of the pieces is 'If You Loved Me You Would' which explores the broad spectrum of teenage relationship abuse. It will be performed at Pilgrim Street for two weeks in November and schools have been offered free performances; follow up workshops and a bursary to help with transport costs. The second production, entitled 'Because', explores the consequences of bullying behaviours. This will also be offered free to schools with follow up workshops and will tour schools in early 2015.

- 6.4 The Kidstime project has recently won a NHS award and has been featured in a number of good practice journals. However, the project is currently working at capacity and there is a waiting list of families referred by a range of organisations. The cross agency steering group are seeking further funding to ensure the project continues and is able to meet the demand. Several of the young people who attend 'Kidstime' have been supported to progress onto and gain additional support from other CYD projects and from the G.I.R.L.S. personal development programme.
- 6.5 CYD has also delivered workshops for CATCH 22 working with vulnerable young women delivering a workshop on media literacy. Other externally funded work includes delivering community dance modules at Hope University and training and advice on developing girls work at the Toxteth Youth Zone.

7.0 Response

- 7.1 **Housing Service** - The team has carried out 495 contacts with young people accessing the housing service this quarter. A new Wirral based supported housing project for 16 and 17 year olds who are in need of immediate accommodation has been opened this quarter. The project provides emergency accommodation and a safe place to stay for up to 8 weeks, for 6 young people. Initial Assessment via Social Care, and a suitable plan is explored with the young person and family during this interim period. Outcomes have included a return home; living with family members or referrals to supported accommodation projects. The new project is working well and has enabled some families to have a period of respite, receive support and young people return home in a planned way where possible.

A joint initiative involving an accommodation provider, Response and young people took place this quarter and resulted in a positive healthy eating project which has received good outcomes for those young people involved.

- 7.2 **Counselling Service** - This quarter 280 sessions have been delivered to 109 unique individual young people. The Drop-in service is well used and a number of agencies are signposting young people for counselling.

Information relating to self harm and suicide ideation during first assessment remains a significant indication in young people requiring help, e.g. of 58 unique individuals seen this period 29 (50%) said they had self harmed and had at some time had suicidal thoughts.

- 7.3. **Drug and Alcohol Service** - This quarter a number of young people reported to the drug/alcohol worker during their one to one sessions that a large organised fight had taken place with over a hundred young people in attendance at Victoria Park. This was between Rock Ferry and several other areas including Birkenhead, Seacombe, Beechwood and Birkenhead North. Several young people had been arrested for offensive weapons and illegal substances including cannabis and ecstasy. Drug related violence towards

young people is still a concern. Youth workers are hearing about young people being assaulted, intimidated and properties being targeted due to drug debt.

- 7.4 Progress is being made on a new Arrowe Park Hospital Accident and Emergency Department, alcohol pathway. A room has been identified at the hospital for Response to deliver a brief intervention / support clinic for young people. This progress is supported by a number of health partners who are pleased with developments and the work being undertaken at Arrowe Park Hospital with hospital presentations involving substance misuse and young people.

8.0 Participation and engagement

- 8.1 **The Youth Voice Group** continues to meet at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre on Monday evenings and the main focus of their work has been on planning the workshop content of the Youth Voice Conference to be held at Wallasey Town Hall on 16th October, 9.30 – 3pm. Initially, the group helped to design a questionnaire that was completed by 200 young people from across Wirral. The consultation feedback was then analysed and the pre-dominant theme that young people wanted to focus on was mental health and emotional well being.

A time-limited 'steering group' has been established to ensure that the conference benefits from the input of a range services to enable better outcomes and be a more meaningful experience for those young people involved. The theme identified from the consultation links closely with the Vision 2018 Children and Young People's Department priorities and so the need for close linkages particularly important during the conference planning stage. The services involved include CAHMS, Terrence Higgins Trust, Wirral Autistic Society and the NHS Early Intervention Team. The partners' role has been to provide support and correct information to inform the workshop content and planning.

Seven workshop themes have been identified which are isolation (related to social media and gaming), dealing with loss and change, healthy relationships, dealing with homophobia, media pressure and literacy, autism and ADHD and managing stress. The aim of the workshops will be to enable young people to share opinions, access support and information, formulate their views and questions to present to panel members. The workshops will be planned and facilitated by district youth work teams, consultants from the steering group and young people who are trained as peer educators. The structure of the day will include issue based performances by young people from Creative Youth Development, a 'hot seating' panel and a market stall of relevant organisations. Motions from the Youth Voice Conference will also be carried forward to the Youth Parliament which will take place on the evening of 11th November.

8.2 Framework for Young People's Engagement and Participation

Elected members, chief officers from across the private and public sectors and the voluntary, community and faith sector have been invited to an event that will take place before the Youth Parliament to launch the Youth Engagement Strategic Champion team which will be an integral part of the 'Framework for Young People's Engagement and Participation'. The role of the Youth Engagement Strategic Champions will be to facilitate a strategic approach to co-ordinate youth engagement across the respective organisations in relation to listening to and involving young people in decision making about local services. They will also ensure organisations have open communication with young people to make sure that they are at the heart of service development and delivery and offering challenge and scrutiny in respect of the design and delivery of strategies and policies which may affect young people. The event will involve an interactive activity facilitated by young people from the Youth Voice Group.

9.0 Health Services in Schools (HSIS)

9.1 This summer Health Services in Schools delivered a personal development programme for vulnerable and young women over a two week period. Two, five day programmes were delivered followed by a celebration meal for both groups. The programme provides a personal development opportunity for vulnerable and at risk young women that would enhance their self-esteem, confidence, resilience, respect for themselves, others and aspirations for the future. This programme links closely with the G.I.R..L.S. project.

10.0 Play Service

10.1 **Beechwood** – Currently, there are 142 children registered, and a noticeable increase in the number of under 8's attending the playscheme. The World Cup tournament held this summer in Brazil enabled the staff to introduce a host of cultural activities for the children including food tasting, flag making, carnival costume making and Samba drumming. The playscheme was decorated with flags created by the children from every country taking part in the tournament. Children participated in obstacle courses, circus skills and sports which increased their physical activity. Staff delivered sun awareness sessions with the children and how to keep themselves protected during the hot weather period. It also provided opportunities for water games and making a water slide. The staff have been supporting children and young people with their homework projects, especially when it involves creating an artifact; these artifacts have included a model of an atom. Over £800 was raised at the Summer Fair to purchase new equipment and materials for the playscheme.

10.2 **Leasowe Adventure Playground** – Children expressed a wish to build their own bike ramp, staff provided advice on the safety aspects i.e. height, bike suitability and safety equipment. The bike ramp challenge was organised by a

group of young people aged 12 -14 years. During the hot weather, staff provided sessions for the children on water safety, especially raising awareness of the dangers of the local Birket River and Moreton Shore.

Children participate in a regular cooking club choosing the menu and the meals to be prepared and cooked. They made spaghetti bolognaise as well as a vegetarian option. It was such a success that the children expressed a wish to continue this project. Overall, 60 children contributed to the menu, shopping, cooking, gathering information from other children and costing out the project. The Saturday Breakfast Club continues, children experience preparing and cooking their own healthy food alternatives for breakfast.

Kilgarth School regularly attend the playground every Wednesday and Friday afternoon, as part of the school's curriculum. Pupils support the wider community, as part of the citizenship agenda, and engage in play activities. Castleway Primary also use the site, as part of the school day, utilising the playground as part of a reward hour.

- 10.3 **Gautby Road** – The summer programme was attended by over 40 children each day, participating in sports, water games and activities including design your own hair clips and bobbles, wall murals, wool monsters and pom pom's. Children designed colourful costumes and head pieces for the Ilchester Park Festival with the support of the St James Centre. Over 50 children attended trips to Farmer Teds, Gulliver's World and also joined in the celebrations at the Annual Play Day in Birkenhead Park. The finale of the summer was the Fun Day, children enjoyed the disco, bouncy castle, face painting, football games, the new playground improvements and a barbecue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the report.

Lindsay Davidson
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