

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 27 OCTOBER 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

WIRRAL SUMMER HOLIDAY PLAYScheme REPORT 2009

Executive Summary

This report sets out the summer play opportunities provided through Wirral Play Council Summer Holiday Playscheme Programme and Youth & Play Service's playschemes 2009. The report notes the increase in those that registered for schemes and an increase in play provision. The Committee is asked to note this report

1.0. Background

- 1.1. Wirral Play Council receives a grant for £58,000 from Wirral's Children's and Young Peoples Department to provide Open Access summer playschemes in the school summer holidays throughout Wirral. Children and young people aged 6 to 14 are welcome to attend the playschemes. Wirral Play Council fundraises within the organisation and is successfully awarded financial grants from other organisations to support the summer playschemes. Wirral Play Council has been providing free open access play for children in Wirral since 1974. The Executive Committee manages the summer playschemes and the day today running is organised by the Play Development Officer, supported by administration staff.
- 1.2. Recruitment for the playworkers starts early in the year and the posts are advertised in February/March. This enables adequate time to put workers through the Criminal Record Bureau process and complete other checks such as references. Every year there are a certain number of playworker's who return to work for us. This year there were 43 returning playworkers making 53% of the overall total of 81 playworkers recruited. The returning playworkers previous experience is valuable, they are able to support and guide new playworkers as they find their feet at the beginning of the summer.
- 1.3. All new playworkers complete a programme of pre summer training that takes place at Wirral Metropolitan College, Twelve Quays and at Wirral Play Council. During their time at the college they undertake a nationally recognised playwork qualification, Take Five for Play. In order for them to complete the course they must complete 12 hours practical work and a reflective diary supporting what they do. All playworkers who took the course completed it successfully. Wirral Sure Start Support Team provides funding for this playwork course. In house training provided at Wirral Play Council equips the playworkers with working knowledge of legislation, policies and procedures plus practical play skills such as arts and craft, sports and games. Paediatric First Aid is also offered and 25 playworkers gained this qualification.

The playschemes were publicised in early July to all primary school aged children in Wirral, through schools via the Let's Go magazine.

2.0. **Ofsted**

2.1. Earlier in 2009 OFSTED made some changes that had implications on the registration process for temporary summer playschemes. The changes regarding qualifications meant Wirral Play Council could not meet the Standards and were removed from the Voluntary Childcare Register. The playschemes are exempt from being on the register as they operate an open access policy and do not care for any children in the Early Years age category. In order to comply with this the age of the children attending the playschemes was increased to six. The register is voluntary but Wirral Play Council value the status and quality assurance being registered with OFSTED has and will endeavour to meet the standards in 2010 and register the playschemes.

3.0. **Budget**

3.1. 80% of the budget is spent on playworkers wages and this figure is increasing each year to keep in line with the minimum wage set by the government. Each playscheme has a Lead Playworker who takes on more responsibility for paperwork etc and is paid a slightly higher hourly rate. The remaining money is spent on play equipment, transport, administration and Play Day.

3.2. Details of each playschemes can be found attached, Appendix 1.

4.0. **Play Day**

4.1. This year's Playday campaign theme, ***Make Time!*** aimed to raise the profile of play and ask everyone to make time for play. The event in Wirral took place on Wednesday 5 August in Birkenhead Park. The day requires a great deal of preparation and planning. Radio Merseyside came in the morning and promoted the day and the benefits of play. All the full time and summer playschemes are on site by 11.00am and the Play Champion, Cllr Chris Meaden, judging the banner competition opened the event. During the rest of the event the children could access the activities freely and have fun playing. The activities included Wheels for All, climbing wall, The Big Art Attack, dance tent, drum circle, the ever popular straw bales, circus skills, talent show tent, mask making, den-building, and many more activities. The day was a great success with almost 1,000 children and their families getting involved.

5.0. **Summary**

5.1. Summer 2009 was another successful year for open access playschemes in Wirral with the total registration number increasing from 2008. The standard of people applying for temporary jobs remained high and there was a significant increase in the numbers of applicants. There were also more volunteers working at the playschemes this year. The playworkers worked hard to provide stimulating and exciting play activities to engage children. A highlight of the summer was Play Day, the sun was shining and hundreds of children enjoyed free play activities in

Birkenhead Park, challenging themselves on the climbing wall, building dens with the straw bales and encouraging each other in the Talent Show. The most successful schemes are those that foster local parental and voluntary involvement. Their support is paramount and some playschemes could not operate without it. Many thanks to the local communities, play organisers, staff, volunteers and parents for their hard work, commitment and support in collectively providing summer play opportunities for the children of Wirral.

6.0. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

6.1 This year 19 Playschemes and were funded primarily by a grant of £58,000 from Wirral Council. These included full-time summer schemes and schemes for children with disabilities.

7.0. **Equal Opportunities Implications**

7.1. The summer holiday programme reflects inclusiveness and promotes equal opportunities and access.

8.0. **Human Rights Implications**

8.1. There are no specific human rights implications arising from this report.

9.0. **Community Safety Implications**

9.1 There are no specific community safety implications none arising from this report.

10.0 **Local Agenda 21 Implications**

10.1. There are no specific Local Agenda 21 Implications arising from this report.

11.0. **Planning Implications**

11.1 There are none arising from this report.

12.0. **Anti - poverty Implications**

12.1 Playschemes are provided free of charge for all children with a high density of play provision in areas of identified need.

13.0. **Social inclusion Implications**

13.1. Playschemes endeavour to ensure children have equal access to play and are able to participate in local play opportunities.
Playschemes are open access and often work with those children and young people who are marginalised.

14.0. Local Member Support Implications

14.1 Holiday play provision is distributed borough-wide through all wards of Wirral.

15.0. Background papers

15.1 Summer Holiday Registration Figures (Appendix 2)
Full-time Playscheme Registration Figures (Appendix 3)

16.0. Recommendations

16.1 The Committee is asked to note this report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

Appendix 2

| <u>Scheme</u> | <u>Days</u> | <u>No Of Children Registered</u> | <u>Under 8's Registered</u> | <u>Total Attendance</u> | <u>Daily Average</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Eastham | 20 | 88 | 34 | 695 | 35 |
| Greasby | 20 | 71 | 16 | 728 | 36 |
| Heswall | 20 | 200 | 42 | 1345 | 67 |
| Higher Bebington | 20 | 231 | 119 | 1953 | 98 |
| Irby | 20 | 129 | 34 | 954 | 48 |
| Moreton | 20 | 99 | 15 | 689 | 34 |
| New Ferry | 20 | 195 | 56 | 1520 | 76 |
| Noctorum | 20 | 92 | 28 | 390 | 20 |
| Overton | 20 | 115 | 40 | 1464 | 73 |
| Pensby | 20 | 108 | 8 | 856 | 43 |
| Prenton | 20 | 71 | 11 | 580 | 29 |
| Seacombe | 20 | 66 | 26 | 785 | 39 |
| Seacombe Children's Centre | 20 | 159 | 35 | 1364 | 68 |
| Tam O Shanter | 20 | 236 | N/A | 652 | 33 |
| Tranmere | 20 | 152 | 41 | 1061 | 53 |
| Vale Park | 20 | 99 | 20 | 999 | 50 |
| West Kirby | 20 | 185 | 70 | 1265 | 63 |
| Woodchurch | 25 | 170 | 42 | 1049 | 42 |
| Special Needs | | | | | |
| Belvidere Centre | 12 | 37 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Wirral Play Council SN | 16 | 136 | 7 | 544 | 34 |
| Total | | 2771 | 682 | 19617 | N/A |

Appendix 3

Open Access Full-time
Playschemes

| Centre | No Of Children Registered | Under 8's Registered | Total Attendance |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Beechwood | 142 | 32 | 5540 |
| Charing Cross | 163 | 84 | 6022 |
| Gautby Road | 164 | 83 | 7116 |
| Leasowe Adventure Playground | 211 | 84 | 13531 |
| Livingstone Street | 144 | 48 | 5381 |
| Woodchurch (summer reg. only) | 170 | 42 | 1049 |
| Total | 824 | 331 | 38639 |

APPENDIX 1

Playschemes

Wallasey District – Five Playschemes

Seacombe Children’s Centre – 159 Registrations

This is a popular playscheme and is consistently busy. The room within the centre is small and just about adequate to meet the needs of the playscheme. There are four playworkers and they take children round to the outdoor caged area whenever possible to give the children more space to play. The children really enjoyed being able to run and play about outside. The team of playworkers were lead by an experienced worker who provided support and advice as some of the children can be quite challenging. The children particularly enjoyed baking, playing football, dancing, face painting and crafts. The playscheme did some joint working with another one of Wirral Play Councils playschemes based at Seacombe Community Centre. They organised a football competition and went on a day trip together. This was really positive in getting the children for different areas of Seacombe to mix together and proved to be very successful.

Seacombe Community Centre – 66 Registrations

A successful playscheme attended by very local children who enjoyed a variety of crafts activities and outdoor play.

Moreton Youth Club - 99 Registrations

The centre is a great venue for a playscheme with a hall for sports and games and a good-sized room alongside the hall for quieter activities and crafts. There is a lack of outdoor space but the playworkers utilised Lingham Park on occasions throughout the summer. After some initial issues with older children disrupting the sessions it was decided to split the age groups and have under 8’s attend the morning session and over 8’s attend in the afternoon. This worked much better and allowed the team of playworkers to focus on the specific needs of each age group. The children enjoyed group games as everyone could join in and craft activities where they learnt a new skills such as bracelet making. Arts and crafts in general were popular activities especially if the children got to take something they had made home with them. The playworkers planned weekly themes, which proved to be popular, accumulating in an end of playscheme Hawaiian party.

Vale Park – 99 Registrations

The playscheme uses Vale House and the room is small but playworkers utilise the park as much as possible.

Belvidere - 37 Registrations

This playscheme is closed access and provides activities for children with a wide variety of abilities and additional needs. The playscheme is integrated and siblings are encouraged to attend. The children liked playing on the big bikes and scooters, 10 pin bowling, having a water fight, dancing at the disco and going on a trip to the Safari park. There is a high level of involvement from both parents and volunteers, which proves invaluable.

Birkenhead District – Three Playschemes

Wirral Play Council Special Needs – 136 Registrations

A successful playscheme ran from Wirral Play Development Centre catering for a large number of children with a wide range of complex disabilities. This is a closed access playscheme running weekdays from 10.00am until 3.00pm. The playworkers are fully trained and deal with every aspect of welfare for the individual children. The children enjoyed a wide variety of play experiences particularly playing with water, arts and crafts activities and group games. They also went on several day trips including Wirral Play Day, Tam O Shanter and Liverpool Museums.

Noctorum Community Centre – 92 Registrations

This was one of the lowest attended playschemes and the playworkers had to do extra publicity to increase the number of registered children. The venue at Ridgeway High school is set back from the road so people passing by may not see the playscheme is open. However over the four weeks children did benefit from a team of committed playworkers who provided a range of activities and day trips out.

Tam O Shanter Urban Farm – 236 Registrations

This playscheme is popular with children visiting the Urban Farm who register and stay for one session. This is why the registration number is so high but the daily average is quite low compared to other playschemes with similar registration figures. The playscheme only takes children over 8 however the majority of children are accompanied by parents so range from a much younger age group.

West Wirral District – Seven Playschemes

Heswall United Reformed Church – 200 Registrations

The playscheme relocated this year to a central position in Heswall town centre at the United Reformed Church. It has always been a busy playscheme and this year proved no different. The playscheme accessed the park across the road as the centre has little outdoor space. The team of playworkers were enthusiastic, hard working and caring. They were supported by great volunteers who were active members of the team. The children liked craft activities and baking, anything that

was tactile and interactive. They would rather engage in free play using their imaginations than play large group games.

Pensby Hope Centre – 108 Registrations

The playworkers showed a good understanding of play and were very flexible and adaptable in situations that were sometimes challenging. The team has a strong leader offering good support and advice. The refurbished venue was not really suited to playscheme activities and other options will need to be looked at for future playschemes.

Irby Methodist Church Hall – 129 Registrations

A successful playscheme and the numbers increased noticeably from 2008, which is really positive. The playworkers organised a football competition with the Pensby playscheme and made full use of Irby Park, which is across the road. The good work carried out by the team of playworkers was also recognised locally by the Methodist Church as they sent a letter of thanks at the end of the summer.

Greasby Community Centre – 71 Registrations

The centre is conveniently split into two areas and offers a suitable space for both crafts and games. Unfortunately outside play is restricted due to the lack of space and the busy car park. The playworkers did take the children to Coronation Park when the weather permitted. Large group games worked well as everyone could get involved. There were some initial problems with older young people being disruptive, that put some younger children off attending regularly. The only way to solve this was to lower the age at this playscheme to 12, to allow younger children to benefit from the provision. This strategy worked well and the regular attendance of younger children increased.

West Kirby, Westbourne Community Centre – 185 Registrations

West Kirby is a popular, well-used, busy scheme. The hall is adjacent to Ashton Park so the playworkers utilised this whenever possible. The team were patient and calm with the children and enjoyed getting involved with the activities. Treasure hunts and football were popular and the children enjoyed a day trip ice-skating in the final week.

Woodchurch Community Centre– 170 Registrations

The playscheme took place for five weeks and gradually became popular and well used. The venue is ideal with a good-sized indoor area and a purpose built play area outside. The children enjoyed sharing their ideas and doing activities they wanted to. They particularly enjoyed pool competitions and craft activities.

Overton Community Centre – 115 Registrations

A popular playscheme that is well attended. The regular children enjoyed getting involved with a game they could all play together and dodgeball was a favourite.

Alongside the sports hall is a good space for arts and crafts activities, which were also popular. At the end of the summer the playworkers took the children on a trip to the Camelot Theme Park.

South Wirral District – Five Playschemes

Eastham Youth Club – 88 Registrations

The Youth Club was a new venue for the Eastham playscheme and proved to be a successful move however it was a bit quieter than previous years. The site is large so needs supervision but the extra space was invaluable when it came to providing sports and large groups games. Activities that could be done in groups such as football were popular as were painting and crafts.

Tranmere Albany Hall– 152 Registrations

This is a popular playscheme situated in the corner of Victoria Park. Initially there were some issues over the use of the hall for the playscheme but once these were resolved the team of playworkers successfully provided a variety of play activities.

New Ferry Village Hall – 195 Registrations

The Hall is a good large space that can be manipulated and used for a variety of both active and quieter activities. The venue is situated across the road from a park that they access. The older boys particularly enjoyed the positive input from the male playworker. Active games and sports were very popular and the children especially enjoyed regular competitions!

Prenton Dell Play Area - 71 Registrations

An outdoor playscheme that is success is very much dependant upon the weather. The team worked alongside the local residents group and library staff to provide activities for the local children, using their venues when the weather was bad.

Higher Bebington Christ Church Hall - 231 Registrations

This was this year's most popular playscheme and ran successfully. The outdoor area behind the church is an ideal play setting and the children spent many sessions outside enjoying the open space, trees and bushes. The children enjoyed playing with the equipment provided but the best equipment was found naturally amongst the trees and foliage, which they used to construct dens and hiding places. One of the older boys registered at the playscheme said "if it hadn't been for your playscheme I'd have been bored for weeks, but I've had a great time".