

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 21 June 2012

Report of the Acting Director of Children's Services

Youth Service – Provision for Targeted Vulnerable Young People

Purpose of Report

1. To provide information on the Dudley Youth Service provision for targeted and vulnerable young people and key priorities for 2012 onwards.

Background

2. The Youth Service has, within its structure, a staff team focused on work with Targeted groups. The groups being supported are Disability, Sexual health and Teenage Pregnancy, Looked after Children and Young People and Crime. In addition the wider staff team also works to improve the outcomes of targeted and vulnerable young people. A recent audit of work identified that at least 60% of these universal resources were deployed to support this area of work at any given time.
3. The following report identifies examples of provision currently being delivered and developed.

Disability

4. There are 5 clubs for young people with learning disabilities supported by Directorate staff running from the following centres:

Learning disabilities

- Monday at Greenhill Youth Centre – Halesowen
 - Tuesday at Russell's Hall Neighbourhood Centre – Russell's Hall Estate
 - Wednesday at Lower Gornal Youth Centre
 - Wednesday at the Source in Wordsley
 - Wednesday at Valley Road in Lye.
5. The clubs are all delivered in partnership with other groups including parents, Kids Orchard Partnership on a Wednesday at Valley Road Youth Centre and the Autism

Outreach Team also on a Wednesday but at Lower Gornal Youth Centre. It would not be possible to deliver the programmes without this support.

Support for the deaf

6. The service also runs Dudley Deaf Youth Club on a Thursday at Russell's Hall Neighbourhood Centre.

Additional support

7. Successful grant applications to Shortbreaks has enabled four of the centres to provide sensory rooms, additional equipment has been purchased for the groups and it has been possible to provide greater holiday activity programmes. Due to the popularity of the groups and current staff ratios, we have begun to look at waiting lists and a more structured referral route. We are also looking to attract additional funding to support this work.
8. As numbers have grown a need for a service specific medication policy has been identified and staff are currently working on a draft with support from nursing practitioners. Some young people as they reach 17 years and over want to become more actively involved in both the running of the club and peer support. The service is developing a wider package of support to develop personal, social and leadership skills as part of what has been named the 'buddy' project.

Health

9. A full time youth worker contributes to the work of the Respect Yourself Team, developing activities around sexual health and relationship education and prevention. In turn all full time youth workers and a percentage of part time staff are trained to deliver awareness raising workshops to groups of young people.
10. The Youth Service and NHS Dudley co manage the CCard system, a programme providing advice and condom distribution in non clinical settings. Through youth centres and alternative drop in sessions the service is the largest single agency operating the system. Young people are often more able to positively influence their peers than adults and a number have been trained up to run the CCard sessions within youth centres. Due to the success of this work a pilot programme is now being developed to train young people to educate others around substance misuse.
11. The service has supported the introduction and development of the NHS Dudley Kickash programme. Grants are available to groups of young people to develop projects that educate others around the dangers of smoking. A number of successful

projects have been completed by young people in youth centres and as part of detached youth work sessions.

Looked After Children and Young People

12. Whilst encouraging young people to access wider youth facilities, the service provides targeted sessions for Looked After young people. At the Kingswinford Youth Centre a Fantastic Fun Club is held on Monday evenings and a Duke of Edinburgh Award group meets on a Thursday.
13. On a Thursday after school at Coseley Youth Centre, The Adventure Circle supports and encourages young people in foster care to access wider youth activities and designs an information newsletter to promote activities and clubs.

Crime

14. In order to develop greater communication and joint work with the Youth Offending Service it was decided to locate a full time youth worker in the Youth Offending Service main office. This has led to a number of joint pieces of work and greater staff skills development. In addition, Detached youth work teams identify routes and priority areas based on information received from West Midlands Police and Community Safety with regard to anti social behaviour. There are five detached youth work teams in the borough.

Young people as Leaders

15. Those young people involved in running sexual health and substance misuse workshops are known as Peer Educators. As a service we are actively looking for other opportunities to enable young people to develop leadership skills, raise their aspirations and be more actively involved within their community. At Meadow Road youth centre some young people have applied for funds to set up a multi gym and have completed their instructor qualifications in order to supervise and coach other young people. In addition to developing the centre it is hoped that it may also support their employment prospects.
16. A group of young people at Coseley Youth Centre have taken part in the regional Leading Lights Project. Having been trained by the University of the First Age, they are now running after school art clubs at the youth centre for young people aged 8 to 12 years.

Participation

17. The Youth Service has long embedded participation within its practice and Dudley Youth Council, Youth Opportunity Fund and young people inspecting youth activities are just a small example of the work that we deliver. Those young people involved in the opportunities on offer are from a wide cross section of the local community.
18. We want to increase the opportunities for young people to develop decision making skills and to be able to influence the design of services for young people. To this end we have begun to deliver Participation Days within borough wide holiday activity programmes and link the opportunities to the wider leadership work mentioned above. Appendix 1 identifies the current Youth Service youth participation framework.
19. The work highlighted above, along with that identified in our universal work, enables the service, directorate and local authority to secure services and activities for young people aged 13 to 19 and those with learning difficulties to age 24, to improve their well-being as defined in subsection 13 under Section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Finance

20. The Youth Service Budget specifically for targeted services for 12/13 is £174,700. As detailed above the remaining youth budgets also support this work.

Law

21. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

22. Services are provided with regard to disadvantaged young people and all young people's needs. The work carried out promotes and ensures that young people are actively involved in shaping and improving services that are provide for them.

Health and Well being

23. The service supports the Health and Well Being Strategy by working in partnership with the NHS to provide opportunities for young people to make health life style decisions.

Recommendations

24. The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report and comment on it.



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