



REPORT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

DATE: FEBRUARY 2012

Acknowledgements

Working Group

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Councillor Brian Essex
Councillor Annabel Shipley
Councillor Jim Pilling

Scrutiny Support Officer

The Task and Finish Group thanked Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer for producing the report.

Support from Officers of the Council

The Task and Finish Group would like to thank the following Officers for their contributions:

Liz Sandiford, Head of People and Policy and Chair of the Children's Trust Gemma Rooke, Community Engagement Officer Rebecca Lawlor, Health and Regeneration Manager Julie Bracewell, Housing Options Team Leader

Contribution from Officers outside of the Council

The Task and Finish Group would like to thank the following people for their contributions with this piece of work:

Martin Kaye, General Manager, Rossendale Leisure Trust
Paul Gallagher, Sports Officer, Projects, Rossendale Leisure Trust
Katie Miller, Club Development Officer, Rossendale Leisure Trust
Gareth Beck, Rossendale Teenage Health Co-ordinator
Carmel Fenning/Gillian Landers and staff from the Young People's Service

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LIST OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task and Finish Group have made a number of recommendations which could have budget implications. Members understand that not all are likely to be achieved in light of the financial savings needed by the Council, but would make the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1

The Task and Finish Group recognised that there needs to be a coordinated approach to the promotion and publicity of activities for young people. Whilst the Group understand that some organisations use social networking as a means of communicating to young people, Lancashire County Council should promote this form of communication to all its partners.

Recommendation 2

Whilst the Task and Finish Group were made aware that Lancashire County Council's Go4lt website has been identified as the tool to promote and publicise activities for young people, it was felt that the site needs to be developed as soon as possible to achieve this. This should be used by all partners to promote their activities to young people about what is going on in their area, which would reduce duplication as well as provide a central source of information for young people

Recommendation 3

That the Leisure Trust, CLAW, Ski Slope and all providers of services to young people should be provided with information in relation to how they can promote themselves to young people using the Go4lt website. They should also be encouraged to promote the website within their own venues/sites.

Recommendation 4

The Task and Finish Group recognise that the Children's Trust has been successful in attracting funding to the Borough and promoting partnership working across agencies, the Group recommends that Lancashire County Council continues to financially support the Trust and the existing funding arrangements continue.

Recommendation 5

There should be a more publicity about what grants are available for organisations to access, with additional support for completing grant applications.

Recommendation 6

It was recommended that the "lead" officer be brought to the attention of Members and that the Head of People and Policy be identified as the key contact for enquiries and communications in relation to Children and Young People's issues.

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1. Purpose of the Report

Overview and Scrutiny developed their work programme in June 2011 and a suggestion came from a councillor that as youth service provision had been reduced by Lancashire County Council, this was an area that needed to be reviewed to examine what was on offer for young people to do in their spare time.

2. Background

Lancashire County Council, as part of a shake-up of youth services in a bid to save £8m, were cutting back on services for young people. This would mean that funding for community groups in the valley was being cut and that the youth centre at Rawtenstall Fire Station would be the 'key' centre for services for young people.

Therefore, the Task and Finish Group was established to look at the possible impact this could have on youth services.

3. Terms of Reference of the Group

The overall Terms of Reference of the Group were:-

- To identify who provides youth services and opportunities for young people (9-19yrs) in Rossendale
- To examine how information about activities available to young people across the borough is collected and communicated to young people
- To identify gaps and barriers to provision in Rossendale
- To explore the effectiveness of partnership working, in particular, the links between youth services and voluntary providers
- To seek information on what is happening in school to encourage sports provision for young people including Art and Culture provision
- To examine the availability of the accommodation service for young people
- To look at provision of Counselling Services within the borough ie mental health/drug and alcohol/emotional support/sex education
- Extended school provision throughout the borough

4. Form of Investigation - How we did it

4.1 One of the first ideas of the group was to produce a questionnaire to take into school and young people services to find out what services were available throughout the borough. We invited Gemma Rooke, Community Engagement Officer within the Council to come along to a meeting.

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- 4.2 We invited the General Manager, Rossendale Leisure Trust, who explained the ranges of sport provision within the Borough for young people
- 4.3 We visited the White Horse Project and the Young People's Services in Rawtenstall to hear the views of those attending the services and what they thought about what was being offered in the borough.
- 4.4 We heard from Gareth Beck, Rossendale Teenage Health Co-ordinator of the Contraception and Sexual Health service for young people under 25.
- 4.5 We looked at written evidence and undertook desktop research of strategies within the Council and outside agencies.

5. What we found out - Local Context

5.1 In relation to producing a questionnaire and having discussed this with people involved in services for young people, it emerged that young people had already had 5 consultations this year - from Communities Team within the Council, Council Voluntary Services (CVS), Groundwork, Youth Service and Children's Trust and therefore we felt that we should not go down this route but find out the results of other surveys to help us with our review.

In April 2011, the Communities Team were commissioned by the Children's Trust to consult on issues around young people in the Neighbourhood Forum Plans, to find out more about how to deal with the issues, and deliver activities to meet the priorities. Gemma Rooke from the Communities Team came along to a meeting of the Task and Finish Group to share the results of the survey.

Around the same time, Rossendale Leisure Trust approached the Council about holding some 'youth only sessions' on Friday nights in Rawtenstall and Haslingden.

During some of the sessions the Communities Team carried out interactive consultation. Other local groups including Positive Start and the White Horse Project were involved in the consultation in order to ensure a wide range of young people being involved.

A DVD of the project was currently being developed in conjunction with young people.

Similar sessions had been run in Haslingden at the Sports Centre and were well attended, with between 25 and 40 young people attending each one.

5.2 Sports Provision for Young People

Rossendale Leisure Trust Rossendale Leisure Trust manages a range of facilities including Haslingden Sports Centre, Haslingden Swimming Pool and

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Marl Pits Swimming Pool. The Trust also has a growing development team working in the areas of Sport and Healthy Lifestyles.

The work of the organisation is overseen by a Board of trustees, drawn from the community. The Trust works in many areas, with current projects ranging from the highly successful 'Girls in Sport' to 'Sportivate'.

The Leisure Trust work has a multi-agency approach working alongside the following:

- Rossendale Borough Council
- Lancashire County Council
- National Governing Bodies
- Rossendale Sport and Physical Activity Alliance
- East Lancashire PCTs and GPs
- Young People Services
- Lancashire Sports Partnership
- Community Forums

The Sports Officer for Projects and the Club Development Officer gave an overview of the range of services accessible to young people.

The Leisure Trust provides an in-school coaching programme in primary schools around the valley, providing sport specific to what the school asks for.

The Trust has also delivered, through the community Sports Unlimited three different programmes each year, free of charge for 7-19 year olds, giving children the opportunity of trying different sports.

Sportivate is also a nationwide initiative aimed at 14-25 year olds who may not seek out sporting opportunities themselves and would not prioritise doing sport in their own time, or those who are doing sport for a very limited amount of time.

Positive Futures is a volunteer development programme working with 14-19 year olds.

The Fusion Project is a 16 weeks funding programme, working with young people services/communities team and the children's trust.

The Rossendale Sport Awards are an annual event for young people to work towards.

A number of events were held throughout the Borough including:

- Rossendale Sports Awards
- Car Park Cricket

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- Rossendale Triathlon
- Family Fun Festival/HSC Football Festival held at Fearns, where 100 children took part
- Support for community events
- Residential trips for volunteers

The Soccer 6 development promotes football around the borough targeting females to play football.

The Health Lifestyles team operates the Exercise Referral Scheme from 6 sites across the borough and offers a wide range of activities

Members were very impressed with the amount of work undertaken by the Leisure Trust in engaging and encouraging young people into sport, but felt that they should advertise this more and whilst the group were shown copies of the different leaflets, it was agreed that these should be more widely circulated throughout the valley.

5.3 The Boilerhouse (White Horse Project)

The Group visited the Boilerhouse (formerly the White Horse Project) and were given background information on the history of the set up of the project, which was established in 2004, with volunteers involved from the outset.

In 2009 the White Horse Project became a company limited by guarantee and the project received the go ahead to convert the former boiler house in Dale Mill, Waterfoot to a youth venue. The Mill is owned by B&E Boys and the project had planning permission for the refurbishment of a small meeting room, office, kitchen, toilets and a large open space with a stage.

The young people that attend are not just from Edgeside, but from Bacup and Haslingden, as well as all High Schools in the borough including Tor View.

The project won the Council's Pride in Rossendale Award in 2009 and individuals received finalist awards in two other areas; Volunteer of the Year and Young Volunteer of the Year.

Altogether there are 25 volunteers with different degrees of commitment, with at least 12 core volunteers. They have lost four recently due to going to university. They are constantly trying to recruit volunteers and the most they would like is 35.

Activities

On Monday and Thursday nights between 5pm-7pm is One Grade Higher, a homework club which provides 1-1 mentoring. This is attended by 20-35 young people. Tuition is provided in a range of activities. There are 5 or 6 volunteers who work with the group, including retired teachers.

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There are numerous other activities including music and chill nights. All young people are offered toast and hot chocolate which is served by 2 young people with food hygiene certificates, who came forward as volunteers.

Wednesday is Art and Media night and they are supported by 2 trained artists from Waterfoot. Between 20-30 young people attend this session.

Members were impressed with the large open space area which had a stage with lights, used on Fridays to give a disco type impression.

Friday night they serve hot dogs, burgers or pizzas, with food being an integral part of what they offer. Some Fridays there are up 54 young people in attendance, with the biggest attendance being 85 young people, which ocurred when a band was playing.

Also on Friday they encourage young people to perform and some young people had formed a band.

Other activities include the traditional - pool, table football, WII, PS3.

There is a computer room with 10 networked computers, which were donated through a school in Radcliffe. These are used on Mondays and Thursdays as part of the One Grade Higher programme.

Volunteers also help with completing such things as University applications.

The project had received grant funding which will enable them to carry forward projects over the next three years from the Council for Social Aid, who would be funding the 'Art and Media Project'. This is already the longest running community arts project in Rossendale.

Children in Need has funded the 'One Grade Higher', an important part of which will each term reward trips that go to those who make best of the time each term to do homework, revision or coaching a particular skill.

The Council grant pays for the lease of the Boilerhouse to enable them to continue to have dedicated premises for the young people's projects.

They had been fortunate to get 6 months of funding for a young person in their gap year to work 25 hours a week.

Members were very impressed with the management of the project and the enthusiasm of everyone was fantastic and all the young people we spoke to commented on how much they enjoyed their time at the Boilerhouse.

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5.4 Lancashire Young People Services

A visit was undertaken by the group to the young people services based in the Old Fire Station in Rawtenstall. The service is available for 13-19 year olds.

Posters were being put in local schools to try to engage more with the young people, this is something they had not done before.

There was different curriculum action ongoing to help youngsters develop their skills.

Staff work with the NEET (not in education or employment), as well as young people with disabilities. There are 223 NEETS under 19 years of age in Rossendale and the service trace, track and offer them provision.

There were numerous activities going on when we visited, two volunteers were busy baking and the hospitality we were given was to be commended.

A number of activities were happening with a volunteer doing henna painting, whilst others were threading beads.

There is a cross cultural group and they have set up a social enterprise coffee bar selling home made cakes etc.

On Fridays they offer outreach and detached work. A detached team bus goes out to respond to 'hot spot' areas which have been identified as youths hanging around the streets/areas. They try to encourage them onto a 'bus' instead of being on the streets.

In February 2012 there will be young people elections giving the young people an opportunity to vote for someone to represent Rossendale and liaise with young people from other districts.

The service also offers sexual health advice on Fridays with dedicated staff from the PCT providing the service (see 5.6 for further details).

Following recent restructures and the recent closure of Crawshawbooth and Whitewell Bottom youth centres, Rawtenstall was to become the key centre opening 5 days a week – afternoons, as well as evenings.

5.5 A visit was also undertaken by the group to Engage, which was established when members of St Mary's church walked the streets of Balladen 'engaging' with the young people, and which progressed from there.

Most of the volunteer helpers were church members and had been helping for years. The building was used by Scouts, Brownies etc and is therefore open most evenings.

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They had received a council grant to improve the toilets, but otherwise the project was supported by the volunteers and equipment was donated.

Around 70 children were in attendance when the group visited, with the average age around 10, but with some older teenagers. Bad weather probably prevented a few more from attending as the norm was around 90 children.

There are lots of different activities, board games, table tennis, table football, pool, indoor football, PS3 and Wii. A different craft is undertaken at each session.

The local PCSOs attend most of the sessions, which is a very beneficial point of contact, both for the Police and the children.

The volunteers are trained in conflict resolution, a skill which is sometimes called upon in dealing with difficult children and ejecting them from the centre if needs be.

The centre is run entirely by volunteers, usually at least 10 each session. 3 volunteers staff the kitchen, serving hot and cold drinks and snacks. The club operates mainly during school terms on Thursday evenings 7.30 to 9.00pm. The volunteers interact with the young people and play board games and Wii with them.

There was a really lively, noisy and happy atmosphere at the Centre when we attended and it was a real pleasure to be there and see local children enjoying the facilities available and interacting well with each other and with the volunteers.

5.6 The group received a presentation from Lancashire Care Foundation Trust's Contraceptive and Sexual Health Service (CaSH) for Under 25.

The service is purely for young people and offers free and confidential clinical services, educational training and deliver sessions for all partner agencies working with the under 25s.

The team consist Teenage Health Co-ordinator, Contraceptive and Sexual Health Nurse, a Youth Worker and Clerical Support.

Young people, predominately aged 13 to 25 years access the clinical services which are delivered at the Maden Centre, Bacup on Monday (3.30pm to 5.30pm) and the Old Fire Station, Rawtenstall on Wednesday (2.30pm to 5.30pm).

The Team are also able to support young people under 25 who are unable to access mainstream CaSH services but urgently require contraceptive advice or treatment through their 'Nurse In a Box' service.

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They had good links with schools, and took assembly for year 10/11 explaining when and where services were available should they be needed. They do training for teachers and go into children's centres. If a young person presents themself to the service, a full holistic assessment of health needs is undertaken. They also link with Early Break and all other relevant young people's services.

"Speak Easy" was a 10 week course run by Children's Centres with accredited courses for parents to talk to children around relationships, puberty and adolescence. Dads were also encouraged to be involved.

The Council supported the Speak Easy project by way of Neighbourhood Forum funding.

Teenage pregnancies – Rossendale has a decrease of 37.4% which was the best in Lancashire and possibly the North West for under 18 conceptions (from the 1998 baseline figure).

Members were impressed with the amount of work being undertaken but felt that as they were unaware of such services, were other agencies/organisation fully aware of just what was available throughout the Borough. The GOFORIT website should alleviate this.

5.7 The group heard from the Community Engagement Officer within the Council on a number of initiatives taking place.

The Fusion Project is delivered through the Communities Team, who fund the Children's Trust to deliver consultations with young people. Fusion was working with funding from Sportivate as well as the Children's Trust.

Haslingden Sports Centre offer a range of activities for young people who attend between 6-8pm and pay £1 to participate. If any young person was unable to contribute the £1, they would not be deterred from attending.

The following activities were held on a weekly basis, with one activity changing each week.

- Table tennis
- Connect X box game
- Street dancing
- Summer football

To improve engagement with young people those who attend Fusion receive a text informing them of activities.

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There were lots of different forms of engagement and it was agreed that there was a need for some form of tangible results that could be visibly representative. There was a 'Hand', 'Feet' and 'Mouth' engagement approach and pupils from Haslingden High School were asked what kind of questions they should be asking.

- Hand how much you would pay for the service?
- Feet transport, how did you get to venue?
- Mouth what things do you like doing?

Other questions were asked which provided the following information:

- 76% thought Haslingden Sports Centre was best location to do activities
- 56% attended on foot
- 24% car
- 12% bus
- 45% £1.00 good fee
- 45% willing to pay more e.g. £3.00

Most wanted to change activities and not do the same every week.

15 – 46 young people attended, with a lot attending from Haslingden High.

Other projects delivered through funding were:

- White Horse Project
- Alfs Black Belt Bacup/Stacksteads issues around transport

Other projects needed to be delivered in 3 other areas within the borough, but learning from Fusion showed that it works because of where it is.

CANWe Solutions are working with young people in the valley in media/recording.

5.8 Services for people with Learning Disabilities

After undertaking some research, the group understood that there was the following provision for young people with learning disabilities.

- STAR is a Youth Club for young people between 11-19 years of age with learning or physical disabilities and is based at the Old Fire Station in Rawtenstall.
- MENCAP Work in partnership with people with a learning disability, and all services support people to live life as they choose. This is based at Warth Old Road, Waterfoot.

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5.9 Extended School Provision

In Lancashire the Extended Services Team was disestablished on 31st March 2011, although there is still a wide range of advice and support available including specialist and targeted support for children and young people.

Extended services are additional services and activities offered by schools to pupils, their families and the community. These services often take place outside of normal school hours and can include access to childcare, sports activities and support for learning.

5.10 Homelessness

The group became aware that Lancashire has developed its first Young People's Homelessness and Housing Strategy. It has been developed to address the accommodation and support needs of young people in the county. The vision of the strategy is to prevent, reduce and aim to eradicate youth homelessness and covers the following group of young people:

- young people aged under 16 who have been identified as being at risk of homelessness
- young people aged 16 and 17 who are homeless or at risk
- care leavers aged 16 21 who are moving to independent living; and
- young people aged 16 18 who need accommodation and a high level of support due to complex needs.

This strategy has been developed by Lancashire Children's Social Care (CSC), the 12 district council housing services, the Lancashire Young People's Service (YPS), Lancashire Youth Offending Team (LYOT) and partner agencies from the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS). There is a determination and commitment from these agencies to work together to offer better outcomes for young people in housing need.

The aims of the strategy are to ensure the accommodation and support needs of young people are met through:

- early intervention and homelessness prevention
- effective joint working
- provision of accommodation and support

In Rossendale more than 1,100 people declare themselves homeless each year; 450 of them aged under 25.

No 1 Queen Street

Rossendale has been successful in receiving a £350,00 investment from the Homes and Communities Agency's National Affordable Homes Programme to

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renovate a run-down homeless shelter in Rossendale at a cost of £420,000 (Rossendale providing the remaining funding).

The home would accommodate 14 homeless people aged between 16 to 25 years of age. It now has ensuite toilet and shower facilities as well as five new emergency accommodation units, including one with disabled facilities.

An annex building provides units of 'move on' accommodation, as the next step towards sustaining independent tenancy.

No 1 Queen Street is owned by Rossendale Borough Council but run by Lancashire County Council.

Housing Options Team

The Housing Options Team offer housing advice to anyone presenting to them from age 16. The main focus of their work is to prevent homelessness however where this cannot be done safety nets are in place and homeless investigations commence.

For young people 16 – 25s there are a number of temporary accommodation options in the Borough including supported lodgings schemes, supported housing projects and supported housing for young mums.

Protocols are in place for referring young people through to appropriate agencies including a robust mechanism through to Children's Social Services when there are clearly unmet needs of 16/17 year olds.

A lot of prevention work has been undertaken around working with young people in the Borough and work been undertaken by the Housing Options Team in two High Schools within the Borough. This was well received and appeared to have made an impact in helping reduce homelessness amongst young people.

A young Persons agency group has been established to assist with monitoring young people, in particular sofa surfers (common term used to describe someone with no residence and usually going from peoples sofas few nights here and few nights there) and hidden homelessness, ensuring services are offered and support given. Many agencies often work with the same young people but in isolation, so the group focuses on a more joint approach sharing relevant information.

5.11 **Local Democracy Week** – Each school was asked if the Council could host an event during Local Democracy Week at their school.

An event was held in two schools in 2011, which enabled greater engagement in community project work and looking at how the Council can work with young people to achieve its neighbourhood priorities.

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Students were asked to consider the Council's Neighbourhood Plan priorities, and design a community project on a budget of £500 for the neighbourhood area in which the school was located.

6 What we found out – Lancashire Context

Partners in the Lancashire Children's Trust have committed themselves to the development, alongside young people themselves, of a co-ordinated Youth Offer for the county.

The vision contained within the Lancashire Youth Strategy 2011-2014 sets out how agencies can work together to improve outcomes for young people in Lancashire through the provision of planned educational and recreational leisure time positive activities – 'The Youth Offer'.

On the basis of delivering a Youth Strategy, a Lancashire Youth Partnership was established to act as a focal point for delivery of the Youth Strategy and the planning and development of the Youth Offer. The Youth Partnership will be a network of voluntary and statutory providers committed to working together to achieve their shared vision.

Website

The Task and Finish Group were made aware that the strategy was for the Lancashire County Council's "Go4It" website to be the key tool to promote and publicise activities for young people, there were a number of key challenges in that organisations loading information on the site need to be trained, plus the site was not being extensively used and therefore its current offer needs further development.

7 Comments from the Group

The group heard about an organisation called 'Headstart', but when trying to make contact it was apparent that this no longer exists due to lack of funding. Contact was eventually made with a volunteer and it was clear that volunteers are still working with young people on a general basis, meeting regularly to offer sport activities. Details of how to apply for grants/funding were given and hopefully the organisation may receive future funding to enable it to be reinstated.

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8 Conclusions

During the review it became apparent that there was a wealth of provision of activities for young people. There are numerous projects being delivered including, schools and uniformed activities (Guides, Scouts, Air Cadets) by both the Council and its partners with lots of positive and innovative work taking place.

It was clear from the review that whilst some organisations were able to provide details of their own provision, there was no single department able to provide a comprehensive list of what activities other organisations put on for young people.

The lack of adequate information was a key barrier to participation. It was agreed that many young people preferred for the information to come to them, rather than make the effort to seek it out themselves.

Communication appeared to be a major issue and a web-based approach used alongside social networking was essential when communicating with young people.

The group welcomed the excellent multi agency working and partnership working which is taking place to address young people's homelessness issues.

Relevant Websites

Rossendale Leisure Trust enquiries@rltrust.co.uk

Young People Services http://yps.lancashire.gov.uk/activity-search

White Horse Project (Boilerhouse) http://www.thewhitehorseproject.co.uk/

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