

Birmingham Youth Service Report - October 2020

To: Education & Children's Social Care O&S Committee
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1. Background Information

- 1.1. Birmingham Youth Service provides young people with enjoyable opportunities and challenging experiences together with information, support and guidance in order to enable them to achieve and develop their skills, abilities, self-esteem, values and identity in their transition to adult life.
- 1.2. Birmingham Youth Service has 15 Youth Centre in Birmingham and works with young people aged 11 – 25 with the predominant age group being 13 – 19 years old. The Youth Service is a universal service open to all young people. The majority of our centres are in area of high deprivation and therefore reach the most vulnerable.
- 1.3. Birmingham Youth Service has 27 professionally qualified full-time youth workers and 11 FTE youth support workers.
- 1.4. Each Youth Centre offers:
 - Information, Advice and Support to young people by a qualified youth worker
 - A safe place for them to meet friends
 - A positive relationship with a “trusted adult” (the youth worker) which is built on honesty, respect and is non-judgemental.
 - The Umbrella Scheme – STI testing, condom distribution & programmes,
 - Targeted programmes – e.g. Prevent, exploitation, youth violence, health,
 - Opportunities for young people to get involved in positive activities.
 - Volunteering Opportunities
 - Youth Participation – an opportunity for young person’s voice to be heard.
 - Intensive support for NEET young people
- 1.5. Funding Streams:
 - BCC – core budget
 - Youth Promise Plus (ESF) - work with NEET young people
 - Umbrella – sexual health contract
 - Violence Reduction Unit/PCC - Violence Interrupters Programme and Place Based Programme
 - Home Office – Prevent – secondment of a member of staff
 - Small pots of funding to deliver programmes – Sports Birmingham, Charities etc
 - Income generation from use of centres

2. Youth Centres and Covid

- 2.1. Having completed an extensive risk assessment and consultation process all but two youth sites are open. Opening is limited to one to one and small group work with young people. In addition to the BCC process we are also complying to National Youth Agency

Readiness Level which determines the level of activity. It is currently at Amber and is not envisaged to increase until the new year. This means that the maximum number of young people we can work with at any one time is 15. Our groups have started with a much smaller number of 4/6 and as and when appropriate will increase their numbers to a maximum of 15 if the space allows, the new processes put in place are workable and young people are respectful of each other and staff.

- 2.2. With the opening of our centres our attendance/reach has increased from 5,610 in June to 16,177 in September. September's figures also show that we have worked with 1,652 individual young people in a meaningful way.

3. Digital Delivery

- 3.1. At the beginning of lockdown, we had an active and strong digital presence with all our projects offering an online platform. We are continuing to offer a limited digital presence as more young people are accessing our face to face work.
- 3.2. Digital platforms are not always inclusive, and we have estimated that during lockdown a significant number of young people (44%) were not able to fully access the youth service digitally for the following reasons:
- Lack of or inadequate access to equipment or data for internet access e.g. large households only having one laptop to share.
 - Lack of safe/private space for young people to talk to us
 - Young people not wanting to engage with video calls as they are ashamed of their home environment and do not want this to be visible.
- 3.3. Some current examples of digital youth work include:
- Outcentral have continued to deliver a virtual youth group to LGBTIQ young people in Birmingham
 - LRG are delivering an online weekly fitness session to young people. This is inclusive in that all young people can join in – weights are substituted by half-filled bottles of milk. LRG are hoping to receive some funding to enhance this programme for young people – replacing milk bottles with resistance bands.
 - 610 are continuing to offer one zoom session per week.

4. Detached and Outreach Sessions

- 4.1. During the summer we were delivering in excess of 33 detached sessions per week. Now that our centres are open this has reduced to 15 sessions. This will increase with additional funding that has been received. We have had 4,432 attendances through our detached programme. These attendances are made up of young people that were not known to us previously.
- 4.2. Our detached sessions are either in the local neighbourhood of centres or in areas in response to intelligence from partners. Examples of this have included:
- Locations identified through the Community Safety Partnership as areas of concern – these have included Cannon Hill and Sutton Park.
 - Areas identified by the Contextual Safeguarding Hub/Youth Focus Group e.g. Sheldon Country Park and Pigeon Park.
 - We respond to requests raised by local police around young people and anti-social behaviour e.g. Cotteridge Park and Weoley Castle Square.
- 4.3. The Violence Interrupters is a PCC funded programme where youth workers are deployed to areas where there is a high level of youth violence. Currently the team are deployed to Aston Park, Small Heath Park, Sutton Park, Newtown and Ladywood each week

- 4.4. Concord Youth Centre have taken detached work to a new level with the use of bikes throughout the summer. By using bikes they have been able to cover a wider location.
- 4.5. In addition to detached work we have also been involved in outreach work. Examples of these include
- Door Step Health and Well Being
 - Food Parcels
 - Well Being and Activity Pack - ER Mason and Oaklands have delivered over 100 well-being packages to young people in Handsworth and Ladywood. Maypole and Concord have also been active with distribution of packs to young people and their families.

5. Work with NEETS

- 5.1. We have continued to deliver on the YPP programme and engage with our young people as well as recruiting more young people onto the programme. This has not been without its challenges, but we have been able to maintain contact and help young people to prepare for entering into training or employment.
- 5.2. We have engaged with 296 new young people this year as well as continuing to support young people from 2019. The focus has been on engagements and maintain engagements through lockdown.
- 5.3. The current figure of positive destinations is 30. This does not take into account paperwork that has not been submitted and still awaiting processing. In addition we are expecting this to increase when BCC receives the starter information from colleges, schools and provides as the first half of the autumn term is peak starter time.
- 5.4. We are working in partnership with the employment team to help support young people over 18 who will be registering on the Kick start programme. Youth workers will support young people to prepare for employment opportunities and also support them once in employment to increase their chances of staying in work.
- 5.5. The Youth Service also has a key role in a partnership application to the Youth Futures Fund which is around supporting young people in a staged intervention process to ensure that they have the support needed to access suitable and sustainable employment opportunities.
- 5.6. Maypole have run a virtual CSC Card training/revision with 15 young people. This has proven to be so popular that we are looking to roll it out to the rest of the service.

6. Challenges

- 6.1. Buildings - ensuring our building have good ventilation throughout the winter without everyone freezing will be an issue. The City are exploring options as to how this can be resolved.
- 6.2. Funding – Covid has had a negative impact on our ability to raise income using our buildings. With our buildings being closed for a considerable period we have not been able to maintain the expected level of income; on the positive this has been offset by our reduced expenditure.
- 6.3. Public Health Priorities – the potential for staff to be redeployed to other Council and Public Health priorities e.g. Drop and Collect.

7. Opportunities

- 7.1. Detached – we have very recently received funding from the Community Safety Partnership to deliver additional detached sessions based on a mapping exercise of existing provision so we can complement and not duplicate provision. In addition, we are also carrying out a consultation pieces of work with young people to gather their views on how covid has affected them.
- 7.2. Sportivate Funding – we have received funding for projects targeting programmes around digital engagement throughout lockdown and the current period to deliver sports and physical activities through virtual sessions, allowing participants to continually engage in physical activity from their own homes.
- 7.3. Participation – we are working with the Assistant Chief Executive to see how we can ensure the voice of young people is heard in our city and embedded in decision making processes. We are at the stage of exploring models that other authority's use e.g. Oldham, Manchester, Leeds and The British Youth Council.
- 7.4. Youth employment – we are part of a wide bid to deliver on a Future First Funding programme looking a working with 14 – 18 young's who are NEET or at risk of NEET. We are also exploring the opportunities round extending our funding for YPP.
- 7.5. Commonwealth Games – the youth service is currently looking at what their role is within the Commonwealth games and how we can ensure that we maximize potential opportunities for young people's involvement.
- 7.6. The Youth Service has developed strong links with the Early Help Partnership model that has been set up in Birmingham to respond to Covid 19. This is locality based and the approach is a partnership between the statutory and voluntary sector to meet the needs of children and families nursing difficult times.

8. Examples of Youth Work Practice

- 8.1. The Lighthouse Young Peoples Centre have continued to operate a food bank for residents and in particular young people. This resource has been made available across the service and which workers have been able to access to enable to access food parcels for their young people.
- 8.2. Concord Youth Centre have been working in partnership with Sporting Elite and Safe Haven around physical activity which has included a football tournament in Farm Park targeting young men at risk of anti-social behaviour.
- 8.3. Maypole Youth Centre along with the Sexual Health Youth Workers (Mandy and Myra) set up a table outside of Maypole Youth Centre where they were able to engage with over 20 young people that they knew and 4 new young people. This was described as a youth club but outdoors – they handed out STI and pregnancy tests and used it as an opportunity to consult on the redevelopment at Druids Heath.
- 8.4. VRU Place Based Youth Violence Programme – this is being delivered on the Three Estates and Aston/Lozells. The Three Estates in mainly a detached programme whereas in Aston/Lozells this includes some Centre based activities and work with parents.
- 8.5. A youth worker in Winson Green "I have been working with a young person during Covid lockdown on a weekly basis, he wasn't interested in education or working, he was looking for street credibility and following his brothers' footsteps (drugs). I stayed persistent in my engagement with him via telephone calls and messages just to see how he was doing and encouraging him to do something as he was only 18years old, we looked at his interests

and hobbies and the possibility of short courses to begin with. He was adamant he didn't want to do anything and wanted to wait until Covid calmed down as now he was worried for his family so didn't go out. I kept him up to date with government guidelines and how to keep himself and family safe by following all the rules and minimising contact. He was keen on doing a security course, so I sent him all the information and courses available, we even managed to do a 3-way call with a careers worker. 7 months later he has now completed his Level 2 SIA door supervisor course and has been offered a job at UCB, this was down to regular contact and having a positive relationship with him".

- 8.6. A youth worker in Small Heath "A family of 6 children, parents and grandmother were all on lock down from March. As a family they needed support, the older four children were regular member of the youth club. During lock down the father was laid off work and the children were finding it difficult to keep up with homework on just one device in the house.
- 8.7 Through the Matt Kendal funding the Youth service was able to obtain funding for 2 Lap tops for the older children and tablets for the younger ones. The children were all able to complete their work on time , thus keeping up with their school work. The family was also provided with food parcels to help them through the challenging times. Through this difficult time, I felt proud that as a Youth worker I was able help and support the young people from our youth centre"