

Birmingham Youth Service Report – 30th March 2022

To: Education & Children's Social Care O&S Committee

Lead Officers: Soulla Yiasouma, Head of Youth Service
Ilgun Yusuf, Acting Assistant Director, Skills and Employability

Introduction

This report is an update to the questions raised at Scrutiny on 24th November 2021. A summary of developments since the last meeting is also provided, including a funded project for reducing knife crime reduction.

- I. How communications for the Youth Service has been improved (the website and social media etc).
- II. Information on the Youth Hubs (to include how they will be different).
- III. Update on the peer research and social action programme, and how the Committee can support this.
- IV. The Young People Strategy and the Directorate's priorities (verbal)
- V. Investment in the Service – Youth Violence Reduction
- VI. Update on Youth Service (since Nov 21)

1. Youth Service and Communication

- 1.1 It was highlighted at the last meeting that there was a need to increase the visibility of the youth service both with young people and professionals. This is something that traditionally the service has not been consistent with however more recently there has been an improvement in this and continuing to grow our presence on social media and other platforms.
- 1.2 To date we have started this journey through the following but recognise that this is the beginning:
 - Identified a worker within the service that has taken on the lead for social media and supporting staff to be effectively use social media. As part of this each project is working towards having an active and relevant social media presence. Examples of our active accounts on Instagram include: concord.youth.centre, thelighthousepc, birminghamyouthchampions; ermaosn.youthworkers. The priority was to have an active Instagram account which focusses on young people and are now looking to improve our presence on other social media platforms.
 - In addition to this we have a group that has formed to exploring the possibility of a Youth Service Website. We have enlisted the support of a volunteer to support us with this.

- We are also looking at branding our centres as safe spaces for young people and making sure that every young person knows where their local youth centre is and how to contact us. An example of this is that we are working in partnership with EMPOWERU Hub, and Radio Blesst to create a campaign around keeping young people safe.
- There have been some examples of recent good practise in social media including a video from The Lighthouse Young peoples Centre highlighting their work of the Transformation For Change programme.

2. Youth Hubs

- 2.1 BCC is leading on a partnership with DWP and other stakeholders to develop and deliver Youth Hubs as part of the DWP approach nationally to have services based locally.

In addition to this we also have Youth Hubs for the Commonwealth Games.

2.2 Youth Hubs in collaboration with DWP

The Lighthouse Youth Centre and The Factory are two of the four Youth Hubs that the DWP have invested in . The thinking around these are about taking service to where young people are at and in an environment that they feel comfortable in.

Youth hubs offer a more accessible and joined up service to young people. Youth Workers work closely with work coaches to provide the most timely and relevant service for the young person. Our youth workers have reported back that there has been an improvement in the partnership between DWP work coaches and youth workers and has had a positive impact on the young people we reach.

In addition to these we also have some satellite Youth Hubs which have limited opening hours – these include The Vibe Youth Centre in South Yardley, Concord Youth Centre in Sparkbrook and Shard End Youth Centre.

2.3 Youth Hubs and CWG

The Lighthouse, the Factory, Concord and Clifton Road Youth Centres are the four Youth Hubs in relation to the Commonwealth games. This is about making the games more accessible for young people and ensuring young people feel included in the games wherever they are in the City. These hubs will be branded as a place where local young people can access information about the games, participate in a dedicated sport as well as being offered a programme of activities themed around the Commonwealth.

3. Peer Researchers – PAC

- 3.1 This is a Youth Endowment Funded programme giving young people the opportunity to explore youth violence and how they can make a difference. It's about young people being involved in the solutions and not just seen as the problem.

- We have employed 12 peer researchers aged between (16 – 21) all who have a lived experience of youth violence. These young people have undergone a training programme to develop their skills around research and social action.
- The peer researchers have led on an initial pilot survey of over 250 young people. They have analysed the findings and are now producing a more focussed questionnaire/survey based on these findings. These will help inform the social action programmes and promote young people's voices.
- Two of the peer researchers are involved in writing the youth violence strategy for the City with the Youth City Board.
- As part of this we are linking up with other programmes in the city including the YEF programme in Lozells.
- To date 100 young people have expressed an interest in becoming change makers and have started to develop ideas around social action projects.

4. The Youth Strategy - early intervention and prevention

- 4.1 The Directorate is leading in developing a strategy for young people as part of cross-council approach to early help, life-long learning, healthy living and wellbeing, civic engagement/participation and good jobs/careers. This will include the increasing opportunities for children and young people, as well as building community resilience, cohesion and living standards.
- 4.2 The Youth Service strategy will also fit in with the wider Directorate and Skills and Employability Plans.

5. Investment in the Service – Youth Violence Reduction

- 5.1 The Council have successfully identified a one off investment of £1 million into the youth service to employ more youth workers to tackle youth violence.
- 5.2 The role of youth work is recognised as a crucial role in supporting children and young people vulnerable to criminal exploitation and involvement in violent crime. Our four key areas is in line with this and focusses on early intervention. We will achieve this by build young people's resilience through developing their skills, abilities, self-worth, values, and identity.
- 5.3 The four key areas that we are investing in are
1. Detached Youth Work
 2. Early Intervention programmes in schools focussing on Year 6
 3. Working with partners to enhance the early intervention offer to young people.
 4. Enhancing core delivery and branding our centres as safe spaces.

6. Update on Youth Service (since Nov 21)

- 6.1 To date the Youth Service has had a meaningful engagement with 5,000 young people and 52,393 attendances.

- 6.2 We delivered on the HAF programme during Christmas. This was a limited programme due to the restrictions around Covid. In addition to this we have been successful in our bid for Easter delivery and have also supported HAF with assessing over 200 bids for them.
- 6.3 Youth workers are continuing to see an increase in numbers of young people suffering with mental health issues. This is presenting itself in lots of different ways. Only last week we had an issue with a young person suffering from mental health issues and threatening to blow up a major city, a young woman who was having intrusive thoughts around ending her own life and another young person hearing voices. Whilst out on detached in the City Centre The Ladywood team came across a young person that was suicidal and planning to jump. Our youth workers were able to talk them down and access support for them. We are continuing to support young people through these issues by being there for them and helping them access agencies that can offer tailored support.
- 6.4 As part of our delivery on the CWG agenda we have;
- Delivered 27 detached sessions around Burbury Park in Newtown.
 - Delivered 24 basketball skills development sessions to 67 young people.
 - Youth Voice - Core group of 25 young people meet fortnightly to shape and advise the CWG Youth team including the branding and supporting Liverpool to include young people's voice in their delivery of World Gymnastics Games.
 - Launch of the Youth Brand at The Factory and a Celebration event at The Lighthouse Young People's Centre with over 350 people in attendance.
- 6.5 Maypole and the factory are working in partnership to deliver on a piece of externally funded work around young women and violence. This has been extremely successful with over 35 young women attending.
- 6.6 We have had 4 careers events in our buildings in partnership with DWP and the Careers Service. They have been extremely successful with over 100 young people attending each event.

Summary and Reflection

This report has focussed on responding to the questions raised at scrutiny. There are lots of examples of excellent work throughout the city, but I think this letter from a young person to a youth worker that left in December sums up the difference our youth workers makes much better than I can.

To Jo,

I'm not sure how to start writing this but, I just wanted to thank you for everything you've done for me. When I first met you in 2019, I was in a weird place in my life. My mental health was improving, but I was still in a kind of 'limbo', not really knowing what to do or how to proceed. Meeting you changed all of that. The YPP group helped me so much with my anxiety - for the first time in Literal Years I was talking to new people my age and actually getting along with them! It boosted my confidence so much! And of course you were the person who got me to go to Out Central /BAYC, where I met the best group of friends I've ever had. It sounds silly to say, but you taking me there changed my whole life; I wouldn't be who I am now without my friends, and I have you to thank for that. Then there was the trip to Wales, which is one of my happiest memories! You gave me the support I needed to come out to everyone which means the world to me. You've been such a key figure in my life these last few years, and there aren't enough words in any language for me to truly convey how much your support means to me. I'm so lucky to have met you!!