

## **Background – Further Information**

### **The current model**

For more than ten years the council's 507B statutory duty (positive activities) has largely been met through the provision of an open access development service (now youth work team). This currently operates from 24 sites across the county offering a mix of centre and street-based activity. This is available to all young people regardless of need and also includes:

- Coordination of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- Promotion of the overall youth offer (universal and targeted provision) via Sparksite & Spark radio.
- Funding of 'The Line' – a confidential phone and web-based advice and support service for young people.
- The coordination of Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs) across the county, which involve young people in shaping local services and activities which affect them.
- Bridging projects which support young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to engage in youth activities in Chippenham, Devizes, Durrington, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Pewsey, Salisbury, Tisbury, Trowbridge and Warminster.

### **The wider youth offer**

The provision of open access youth work and activities forms part of a much wider offer of help and support to young people. The youth work team is a part of the council's Early Intervention, Youth and Prevention Service, which provides a range of other services, including:

- Targeted youth support work (14-18 year olds) via personal advisors and destinations trackers to encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education, work or training, including delivery of the September Guarantee (learning offer for 16/17 year olds) and the Government's Youth Contract (via subcontracting arrangements).
- Youth offending and prevention teams (8-19 year olds) which work with young people who have offended (including support and supervision) or are at risk of doing so.
- Coordination and management of a volunteer & mentoring scheme which encourages, supports and trains local people from within Wiltshire's communities to volunteer in a range of roles. This includes the requirement to identify and register volunteers in relation to the youth justice system e.g. appropriate adults and referral panel members.
- An inclusion, behaviour and attendance team that promotes educational well-being, inclusion, positive behaviour and school attendance & achievement by identifying and supporting those with, or at risk of developing additional needs. This includes the Ethnic Minority Achievement,

Health Needs Related, Behaviour Support, Education Welfare and Travellers Education services.

- Supporting young people who display risky behaviours including those who go missing from home and school. This includes coordination of the Wiltshire Risk Management Group which provides a joint multi-agency approach to addressing the needs of very vulnerable young people (e.g. runaways, problematic substance users, those at risk from child sexual exploitation, self-harming etc).
- A young people's drug and alcohol treatment service (Motiv8) which includes specialist support for children and young people (0-19 year olds) who are problematic substance users and children of parents/carers/significant others who are problematic substance users (otherwise known as Hidden Harm).
- Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre which offers outdoor activities to primary and secondary school age children via a traded service to local schools.
- Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership that coordinates a wide range of arts-based programmes and projects for vulnerable young people.

The council also funds a local youth programme called 'Skills4Success' – a £265,000 scheme which is helping young people to develop the confidence and skills they need to take up education, work or training opportunities.

A voice and influence team is employed that champions and supports young people in decision-making processes about services and activities which affect them. This includes support for the Wiltshire Youth Assembly, Young Commissioners, UK Youth Parliament, Wiltshire Youth Disabled Group, Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Groups and the Children in Care Council.

Young people have access to a broad range of leisure facilities and services. Figures show that in 2012/13 just over one million attendances were made to these services and activities by U16's.

The National Citizen Service is available locally which encourages 16 and 17 year olds to undertake outdoor activities, meet new people and participate in community action projects.

Targeted support to help young people back into education, training or work is available through a number of organisations working together to deliver the government's youth contract scheme for 16 and 17 year olds.

A wide variety of community and voluntary sector organisations provide good quality services and facilities to young people in their neighbourhoods. Community area boards sponsor local youth projects in their area through 'You Decide' events which engage communities in decision making.

## **Why and how does provision need to change?**

### *Support for young people at risk and improved safeguarding*

Safeguarding and protecting the most vulnerable is a key priority for Wiltshire Council as outlined in its business plan and like most areas across the country, the council is experiencing increased service expectations, particularly in safeguarding and social care (e.g. Munro review of child protection (May 2011) and new Ofsted framework for the inspection of children's services (November 2013)).

To respond to this the Wiltshire Children & Young People's Trust and Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board has developed an Early Help strategy which seeks to improve outcomes for children, young people and families by providing the right help as soon as it is needed.

Preventing problems from occurring is also important in reducing costs, particularly at a time when public funds are severely limited. Consequently, the council needs to re-focus its youth services so that young people in most need of support can access them and that they are supported before problems escalate and reach crisis point.

### *Meeting new statutory responsibilities & focus on outcomes*

In 2012 the Department for Education reminded councils of their duty to secure for young people aged 13-19 (up to 24 for those with learning difficulties), so far as reasonably practicable, access to sufficient educational and recreational activities (also referred to as positive leisure-time activities) which improve their well-being.

Updated statutory guidance reminded local authorities to continue supporting young people, especially those who are more vulnerable, to engage positively in their communities and make successful transitions to adulthood. This involves local authorities targeting their resources on those most at risk and determining which services can be delivered by voluntary and community sector organisations, so that the council directly provides only where it is clearly best placed to do so.

To fulfil this duty councils are required to take the strategic lead for coordinating the overall local youth offer of all available youth work and activities for young people. Effective partnerships should also be developed with other providers and community partners in order to plan and deliver activities. Council's are also required to take steps to ascertain the views of young people and take these into account when making decisions about services and activities for them. Information about all the available provision should also be publicised and positive leisure-time activities should demonstrate good outcomes for young people's well-being.

The new statutory guidance removed the previous Ofsted Inspection Framework for youth services and associated performance indicators. Instead,

local authorities will be assessed against their strategic responsibility for coordinating a sufficient local youth offer by working in partnership with voluntary and community organisations and other key partners.

Young people should be involved in inspecting the quality and accessibility of provision and positive trends showing improvement in young people's well-being, personal and social development evidenced. This means that the council will need to develop new arrangements for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the youth offer.

*A modern service which meets young people's needs of today and tomorrow*

In the ten years since the open access development service (now youth work team) was first established the lives of young people have changed considerably. The rapid expansion of home entertainment, the growth in the number of commercial leisure providers, and the launch of smart technology combined with the phenomenon of social networking means young people are growing up in changing social environments and are living very different lives. Future provision needs to respond to this, and be delivered differently, in a more innovative and engaging way, and in doing so make the most out of community area resources.

*The voice of young people*

Through consultation and engagement with young people we know that they aspire to have a greater influence over services which affect them. They also want provision to be determined locally, with suitable space being made available for them within their community area.

Young people's involvement in democratic processes is well-developed in Wiltshire. Enhancing this further by involving young people directly in the design, development and delivery of youth activities will give them a greater say over what is provided, when and where, ensuring this provision reflects their needs.

*Increasing participation & value for money*

The latest data shows that 12.05% of the 13-19 population access the council's youth work provision<sup>1</sup>. This represents 4933 individuals out of a 13-19 population of 40,934. These figures are not in any way a reflection of the quality of youth work and activities taking place across the county but perhaps rather the capacity of the current operating model to provide what the vast majority of young people want. It's important to recognise that many young people are likely to be engaged in a vast range of other activities offered by voluntary, community and private sector providers.

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<sup>1</sup> Covering period April 2013 to March 2014 (1 full year), Wiltshire Council IYSS database, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and based on Office for National Statistics 2012 mid-year population estimates.

The council's youth work team undertakes some excellent work with young people and key findings on its outputs are highlighted below covering the period April 2013 to March 2014 (1 full year):

- There were 67,526 visits to youth work sessions
- Named individuals each attended an average of 13.39 sessions
- Youth workers carried out significant interventions with 466 of the named individuals (linked or not linked to session attendance)
- Taking into account those young people who attend more than one centre, which reduces the number of named individuals to 4639:
  - 1.14% (53) were subject to a Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
  - 0.30% (14) were subject to a Single Agency Referral Form (SARF) requesting integrated youth service involvement.
  - 2.85% (132) were not in education, employment or training (NEET) at the time they attended.
  - 14.98% (695) had a learning difficulty identified.
  - 11.83% (549) were eligible for free school meals.
  - 8.19% (380) were involved with children's social care at child in need status or above.

It is our aspiration that a future operating model reaches more young people, engages with their changing lifestyles positively and builds on the valuable work of the voluntary and community sector. A varied menu of provision is needed which gives young people access to what they want when they want it, and increases their participation in youth activities. The council also needs to get much better at evidencing the impact of the youth offer on young people's lives, with a focus on outcomes.

#### *Supporting delivery of the council's Business Plan*

At the heart of the council's four year Business Plan (2013-17) is a vision to create stronger and more resilient communities. Key priorities are to continue to protect the most vulnerable, boost the local economy; creating and safeguarding jobs, and encourage communities to come together and provide support so that they can do more for themselves.

Delivering the plan is key to managing unprecedented financial challenges by balancing the growing demand for services against the reduction in funding from central government. This requires tough decisions and the council needs to find ways by which it can deliver more with less.

This means developing a more sustainable model for positive activities for young people, which provides value for money and ensures that help, support and resource is targeted at those who need it most.

## **The vision for youth activities**

The council's ambition is to make available a comprehensive, effective and inclusive youth offer which supports young people, particularly those who are vulnerable, in their transition to adulthood, and delivers what young people and their communities want. This reflects the council's overall vision to create stronger and more resilient communities, with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable and putting communities in control of their neighbourhoods to shape public services and tackle local issues.

Since becoming a unitary authority in 2009, the council has taken significant strides toward achieving its vision through a forward thinking approach. This has involved enhancing local governance arrangements to facilitate closer partnership working between organisations and stronger community engagement in local decision making, activities and events.

Funding has continued to be devolved to community areas so that this can be targeted at local priorities and the campus development programme will see the launch of 18 community campuses, designed by communities and providing the services they want and need. Building community capacity through volunteering has also been a major focus and success, an example of which includes more than 300 volunteers being supported to play an active role in the delivery of library services across the county.

The council's youth service has been part of this transformational journey, driven by the development of an 11-19 commissioning strategy in September 2011 which set out the future direction of travel for integrated youth services. For youth work and activities this meant the implementation of a strengthened youth work offer which has included a greater focus on community working and protecting the most vulnerable.

For example, youth advisory groups have been launched in each community area, linked to area boards, supporting young people to plan and shape local services. Partnership working with voluntary and community sector organisations has been improved and more volunteers have been supported. There has also been a stronger emphasis on support for those in most need of help through targeted interventions, 1:1 and individual casework.

The council's aspiration is to accelerate this pace of change even further and put youth activities right at the heart of local neighbourhoods, having a positive impact on as many young people's lives as possible, helping them to connect with their communities, raise aspirations, build resilience, make positive lifestyle choices and achieve at school.

This requires an even stronger focus on community working and capacity building – a shift in culture for the council, moving from a direct provider to an enabler. By bringing young people and their communities together a unique youth offer will be available in each community area tailored to local needs. This will better reflect the modern lives of young people and increase their participation and involvement in youth activities.