

Leaders Guidance for Community Area Boards on Positive Activities for Young People

September 2014

1. Context

Wiltshire Council has adopted a community-led model for the provision of positive activities for young people. By delegating responsibility and resources to Community Area Boards for youth activities, the council is committed to supporting young people and their communities to come together to develop a responsive and locally driven positive activities offer for young people. This means the positive activities offer will develop differently in each of the 18 Community Area Board areas to reflect local needs.

Definition of Positive Activities

A positive activity can be any educational or recreational leisure-time activity that is arts, sports, leisure, informal education and community based which helps young people achieve healthy and safe lifestyle outcomes.

Positive activities are for young people aged 13-19 (up to 25 years of age for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities) and may include activities and support which:

- Helps young people connect with their communities, enabling them to belong and contribute to society e.g. through volunteering
- Provides opportunities for young people to take part in a range of sports, arts, music and other activities where they can socialise safely with their peers and develop relationships, including with adults they can trust
- Encourage young people's personal and social development
- Improve young people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Help young people to achieve in education, work or training
- Prevent and divert young people away from risky behaviours e.g. teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour

2. Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996

S507B of the Education Act requires Council's, so far as reasonably practicable, to secure for qualifying young persons (aged 13-19 in the local area¹) access to sufficient positive leisure-time activities which improve their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities. With an annual budget for positive activities for young people and enabling support from Wiltshire Council Children's Services, this responsibility has been delegated to Community Area Boards.

The Equality Act 2010

Community Area Boards are required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under S149 of the Equality Act 2010. Community Area Board members must consider the equality issues and impact of proposals as part of the decision-making process. This requires the council to have regard to the need to:

¹ Up to 25 years of age for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Duty is in relation to protected characteristic groups and has to be applied in the delivery of Wiltshire Council services and in the employment of its staff. The relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, and nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Wiltshire Council Constitution

Area Boards are required operate in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Constitution. In particular, it states Area Boards will allocate their delegated funds in accordance with this guidance issued by the Leader and that they must operate in accordance with the council's budget and policy framework and in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution. Area Boards must comply with the statutory equality and safeguarding duties as well as the council's rules on contracts and procurement (Part 11) and the Code of Conduct (Part 13) and the objectives set out below.

3. Objectives

- Create, develop and maintain a sustainable Local Youth Network (LYN) as a sub group of the Area Board in accordance with attached terms of reference;
- Identify, plan and make available a broad offer of positive activities for young people in their area, taking into account the needs and views of young people, and priorities identified within the local Joint Strategic Assessment;
- Secure young people's participation and direct involvement in all stages of the decision making process about the needs, outcomes, priorities and options that form the basis of the offer;
- Identify and secure suitable, safe providers and/or projects/programmes to deliver positive activities, making the best use of local resources;
- Comply with the statutory duties outlined in section 2 and demonstrate compliance through monitoring and evaluation evidence;
- Promote the local positive activities offer effectively, in a way which maximises young people's participation and involvement;
- Promote improved partnership working between organisations and groups working with young people, and develop links with other Local Youth Networks and services for young people;
- Encourage volunteering and community involvement in the development and delivery of positive activities;
- Maintain effective communication with all members of the Local Youth Network to keep them informed and involved;
- Comply with any special requirements asked for by external/alternative funders.

4. Priorities

- Ensure that access to a broad range of safe positive activities is open to all young people regardless of their circumstances or needs;
- Ensure that young people are directly involved in the design, development, delivery and review of local provision. To include representation on the Local Youth Network and identification of needs and priorities;
- Ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people are made a high priority;
- Ensure that the positive activities offer reflects the needs of young people and the wider community, enabling them to pursue and progress in their areas of interest.

5. Financial requirements

A budget for positive activities for young people will be allocated annually to Community Area Boards using the locally agreed Area Board Funding Formula based on the population of 13-19 year olds (using Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates). This will ensure that funding is allocated equitably across community areas according to local needs.

The funding is revenue based and must be used for the provision of positive activities for young people, targeted at the 13-19 age range (up to 25 years of age for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities). The funding is ring-fenced for these purposes only.

This funding is not to replace other local funding which is currently used to support services and activities for young people. Community Area Boards are required to use the positive activities for young people funding to complement and enhance other local resources, to secure an offer of positive activities which meets the needs of young people in their area.

Community Area Boards will be accountable for the budget, which will include regular financial reporting of spend and compliance with the council's budget and policy framework.

Budgets are allocated annually for use within year. Roll-over will not normally be permitted although funding that is committed to local positive activity provision but unspent at year end will be carried forward subject to the normal financial management arrangements.

6. Support

Community Area Boards and their Local Youth Networks will be able to access a wide range of support to enable them to develop and deliver a needs-led and sustainable positive activities offer for young people. This consists of technical, professional and developmental support which is set out in the 'Positive Activities Toolkit for Community Area Boards' and includes access to a Wiltshire Council employed Community Youth Officer.

7. Administration

Administration should be kept to a minimum and shared by members of the Local Youth Network, utilising relevant expertise from the stakeholders involved. The operation of the Local Youth Network and associated support will be provided by the Community Youth Officer with assistance from the Community Area Manager / Community Engagement Officer.

8. Wiltshire Council expectations of Community Area Boards and Local Youth Networks

Monitoring and evaluation requirements:

- Put into place monitoring and evaluation arrangements with providers of positive activities to ensure good quality services and that young people's needs are being met;
- Monitor and evaluate the impact and outcomes of the overall local positive activities offer on an annual basis, to include service user feedback;
- Provide Wiltshire Council Children's Services with regular information on the activity in the area so that a database of activity across the authority can be held centrally;
- Provide a breakdown of how funds are spent;
- Provide evidence that equality impacts and due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty have been considered as part of the decision making process;

- Provide evidence that young people have participated and been involved in decision making processes to develop the positive activities offer, and that their views have been taken into account.
- Keep a record of actions agreed in accordance with Wiltshire Council regulations; to ensure that recommendations made to the Community Area Board and the decision making process are open and transparent.
- Provide evidence that the recommendations of Local Youth Network have been taken into account.
- Share best practice with other Community Area Boards and Local Youth Networks across the county.

Policies and Procedures

Community Area Boards are required to adhere to Wiltshire Council policies and procedures. It is particularly important that Community Area Boards ensure they understand and are compliant with the equality of opportunity and safeguarding policies. Safeguarding guidance has been developed for Community Area Boards in respect of positive activities for young people and this will need to be adhered to at all times.

9. Quality and Standards Framework

Wiltshire Council has developed a quality and standards framework for positive activities for young people. Community Area Boards, its suppliers of positive activities for young people and Local Youth Networks are expected to adhere to this framework. This is included in the 'Positive Activities Toolkit for Community Area Boards'.

10. Decision-making process

Community Area Boards will make decisions at public meetings on how funding should be deployed to ensure that decision making is open and transparent.

The decision making process must:

- Take into account recommendations, advice and guidance from the Local Youth Network;
- Evidence that young people have participated and been directly involved in the decision making process and that their needs and views have been taken into account;
- Take into account and ensure compliance with the statutory duties outlined in Section 2 of this guidance;
- Demonstrate that safeguarding and quality assurance standards have been met;
- Ensure that impact assessment will form a condition of any funding and/or procurement decision so that the effectiveness of positive activities may be monitored.

Community Area Boards should implement their decision making powers in accordance with the 'Positive Activities Toolkit for Community Area Boards'.

11. Review

This guidance is subject to change and may be reviewed by the Leader at any time.