

Youth Work Report to Chippenham Area Board -7th January 2013

Background

Youth work is a part of the Integrated Youth Service and we provide a range of services to young people from open access youth work to targeted support for those young people with additional needs to young people requiring specialist services.

Youth Work Offer

“Wiltshire Council’s Youth work provision is ‘needs led’, developmental and community based. It is built on a youth work curriculum. This means: that we keep the needs of young people central to our practice at all times; that we work with them in the context of their own communities; and that we help them to develop the wide range of skills, knowledge and understandings they need to make a success of their transition from ‘child’ to ‘independent adult and active citizen’. Clearly, this indicates that there is far more to youth work than the stereotype of supervising young people playing pool and table tennis in youth clubs. The latter bears little relation to the reality and breadth of the work, which when accurately described is all about the skilful and subtle art of informal education” **Learning from Life, July 2010, Wiltshire Council**

Future of Youth Work in Chippenham

Since 2009 the Council has used the Staffing Funding Formula to allocate the funds we have available across each Community Area so that everyone can see that there is a fair allocation. The formula is as follows:

- 25% of the total budget as a fixed amount for each community area
- 50% based upon the numbers of 13-19 year olds in each community area
- 10% based upon deprivation using the indices of multiple deprivation
- 10% based upon rurality/sparsity
- 5% held centrally to cover emergency and/or training/maternity cover

There are no plans to change this arrangement so whatever the size of the youth work budget it will be allocated across the County using the above. Clearly I do not know what the future holds or how the Council will decide what it’s priorities are in the future, but to date Wiltshire has remained committed to providing services for young people at a time when other Authorities have significantly reduced their spend on youth work.

Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs)

The Wiltshire 11-19 Commissioning Strategy was agreed by Cabinet and the Wiltshire Children & Young People’s Trust in September 2011. This included the implementation of a new local Youth Work Offer.

Part of the Wiltshire Youth Work Offer includes the formation of Youth Advisory Groups with standard terms of reference in each community area, led by young people. These groups will be linked to Area Boards and chaired by a young person under 25. Over 50% of the members will be under 19 years of age and the groups will play a key role in improving the coordination of positive activities for young people in local areas. This will involve encouraging partnerships that avoid overlap and fill gaps.

The groups will also be involved in planning and shaping local services from a young person's perspective. Furthermore they will help local young people know what opportunities and activities are available for them to access. Mechanisms will be established so that knowledge and ideas can be shared between the groups across the county.

The purpose of YAGs is to build on the work which Area Boards and young people have completed through their local Community Area Young Peoples Issues Group (CAYPIG) around increasing the voice and influence of young people. YAGs are a development of the CAYPIG and will be very much an opportunity for young people to hold local providers of services, including Wiltshire Council, to account for the service they provide and to also work with young people to see how we can improve services.

It is for each Area Board to decide through consultation with young people whether they wish to retain the CAYPIG and link this to the YAG or to replace the CAYPIG with the YAG. This is a local decision and to date across the County different community areas have taken different decisions which is fine as we are keen to respond to local demands. This is part of our ongoing commitment to ensure that young people are involved in influencing the design and delivery of services they use and key to this is the involvement of young people in Area Boards

Local Picture

Chippenham has a well established Youth Strategy which is integral to the Area Board so in many ways is ahead of the developments across the County. Dates have been set for the year and training has also been organised for young people to ensure they can take an active, equal role in the Youth Advisory Group. A local elected member has been identified from the Area Board and we will provide regular updates to the Area Board. There have been local discussions around identifying an appropriate Chair but this has not been resolved yet and a lot of work has been put in to try to ensure there is good representation from a range of young people, not just those who are in contact with the Youth Work Team e.g. a number of the YAG meetings are being held in schools to encourage their involvement. The Youth Work Team Leader, Richard Williams, will be the lead on this area of work as it is a priority for the coming year.

Kevin Sweeney

20th December 2012