

Youth Work Delivery in the Southern Wiltshire Community Area – Plans for the Future

One of the advantages of having been away on secondment is that it has given me some space to reflect on my first three and a half years in Southern Wiltshire. This has included looking at what has gone well and what has not gone well but also to think about the different ways in which we could use the resources available for youth work delivery in Southern Wiltshire.

Having been away for nearly a year, it seems logical to me that we use this opportunity to have a conversation about this, rather than just returning to what we used to do before.

In my opinion, there are a number of factors to take account of before considering the options. These factors include –

- What do we actually mean by youth work
- The specific nature of the Southern Wiltshire Community Area
- The youth work resources put into the Southern Wiltshire Community Area by Wiltshire Council

What do we actually mean by youth work

Wiltshire Council produced a strategy for all it's work with 11 to 19 year olds. As part of that, a specification called the Wiltshire Youth Offer was produced and it described youth work as the following -

'Youth Work' describes a particular youth service approach which is planned, has a clear purpose and offers young people developmental opportunities. The key focus of youth work is to enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society, and to reach their full potential (2008 National Occupational Standards for Youth Work).

The service will offer planned, fun, structured and challenging youth activities, programmes and learning opportunities based on the needs of young people and the commissioning priorities set out in the 11-19 commissioning strategy. These activities and programmes will enable young people to develop a wide range of skills, capabilities, networks and relationships in order to make a successful transition to adulthood.

The service will focus its efforts on developing the following capabilities for young people:

- *Communication*
- *Confidence and agency*
- *Planning and problem solving*
- *Relationships and leadership*
- *Managing feelings*

Integrated Youth Services Service Specification – The Wiltshire Youth Offer 2012-2015 p2-3

In other words, whilst youth work can take a number of forms and be delivered in a range of ways, at it's heart is the development of young people.

The Specific nature of the Southern Wiltshire Community Area

Those of you who are from the Southern Wiltshire Community Area don't need me to tell you that it is a large rural community area with a number of villages spread across it. There is no logical centre to the community area to act as a hub and if there was, transport would be a fairly significant issue to ensure access for all to such a centre.

The youth work resources put into the Southern Wiltshire Community Area by the Wiltshire Council

(Please note that these resources come from a number of pots which each have a designated purpose – so, for example, the money to pay the office rent has to be spent on office rent and can't be used to increase youth worker hours)

- Like almost every other Community Area, Southern Wiltshire has a full time Youth Development Co-ordinator of which 18 hours a week is for direct delivery of youth work provision.
- Southern Wiltshire also has 1352 hours per year (equivalent to 26 hours a week) of Assistant Youth Worker time (this is calculated by taking all of the available funding for Assistant Youth Worker time across the county and applying a formula which takes account of youth population, rurality and deprivation in each community area).
- The Urbie, a Peugeot Boxer van which has been converted into a small youth centre on wheels (which can reasonably sit up to 8 people, including youth workers).
- Rent to pay for an office space for the Youth Development Coordinator
- A budget for the travel costs of the Youth Development Coordinator and stationery.

Other factors to take into account when considering resources are –

- Southern Wiltshire does not have a Wiltshire Council funded youth centre nor does Wiltshire Council cover the costs of any buildings we use in the community area. In other words, we have to find the funding from within the community area for any buildings we have to pay to use. In my opinion, the large rural nature of Southern Wiltshire means that a youth centre in one place would not be the best use of resources. However, having worked in Westbury Youth Development Centre for a year, I have to say that having a youth centre made planning and budgeting delivery a lot easier as I didn't have to worry about finding suitable spaces for the delivery or raising the funding to pay for it. Whilst talking about buildings, the other strategic issue which we have to take into account is the Council's plan to move towards Campuses. This will not be happening imminently in Southern Wiltshire, but it is something which will need to be taken account of when the discussions about a Southern Wiltshire campus start.
- Since 2012/13, all community areas have an annual income figure which they are required to raise to contribute towards staffing following savings made in the youth work team budget. The figure for Southern Wiltshire is presently £1,900 and this is calculated using the same funding formula which is applied when allocating the assistant youth worker staffing resource. This can not be met by underspending the annual budget allocation for Southern Wiltshire but has to be raised and paid in to Wiltshire Council.

My thoughts about future delivery

In order to be able to focus on developmental opportunities for young people, I think we should divide the work into two categories. Firstly, contact making, which is where young people become aware of the opportunities on offer and secondly, developmental opportunities. I believe that we should put as much resource as possible into the developmental opportunities whilst recognising that we need to put some resource into the contact making otherwise we won't have many young people engaging with the developmental opportunities.

One of the main things I've reflected on is that whilst delivery of one night a week of youth provision in a number of different villages across the community area (which is what we focussed most of our resource on before I went away on secondment) has meant that young people from a number of different parts of the Community Area have had access to our provision, the fact that it is only one night a week means that there has not been the capacity to offer a range development opportunities within that delivery. The majority of the developmental work has been when we have sign posted young people onto our other projects – Leisure Credits, specific projects like the drama project, involvement in voice and influence work to name a few.

Taking this into account, I offer the following options as ways in which we could undertake contact making. These are in no particular order and are not mutually exclusive, **however, the more resource we put into this part of the process, the less resource we'll have for the developmental opportunities –**

- School lunchtime – using the school lunchtime (once a week) as an opportunity to meet with young people and promote the developmental programme. This could either be by moving about the areas the young people use at lunchtime, or by having a designated space where the school community know that youth workers are or a combination of the two.
- Voluntary Youth Groups (eg uniformed groups, faith groups, village youth groups etc) – youth work staff attending voluntary youth groups to promote the developmental programme. This could either be every week (which would also have the potential to offer support to those voluntary groups that want it) or on a fairly regular basis (say once every 3 to 4 weeks). If we were to do this, we would need to do a mapping exercise to ensure we had up to date knowledge of voluntary youth provision across the Southern Wiltshire Community Area to ensure an equality of access to support for the voluntary youth sector from the youth work team.
- Outreach promotion team – a team of youth workers who travel around the community area on a weekday evening engaging with young people as they find them with a view to promoting the developmental programme.
- Marketing – working with young people to identify the most effective and appropriate ways to promote the developmental work we are doing in both the real world and online.

In terms of the developmental programme, we would regularly consult with young people to ensure that the programme we are offering is responding to their needs, both in terms of the opportunities available and when they are offered. Projects I am aware of that have run in the past are things like Leisure Credits, voice and influence work, sports projects, arts projects and groups for specific awards (eg Duke of Edinburgh Award). These projects could run as one off sessions or over a holiday or over a number of weekends or on a regular weekly basis. As I have already said, the decisions about what would be in the developmental programme and when it was offered will be taken in consultation with young people and will be constantly reviewed.

We would try to ensure that young people had access to as many of the developmental opportunities running at any one time as possible and so we would look at where the delivery of these projects is located and run transport from other parts of the Community Area whenever feasible.

How might this look?

I am slightly wary of giving examples of different models for the future, but am also conscious that some people reading this paper might find this useful. I offer the examples in Appendix A with the proviso that these are only examples of what is possible and I'm not proposing them as formal options.

When considering the different delivery models, the total number of annual youth work hours available is 2180 hours which is made up of 1352 Assistant Youth Workers hours and 828 Youth Development Coordinator hours (18 hours a week x 46 weeks to take account of annual leave). As all sessions need to have at least 2 members of staff, this equates to a maximum of 1090 hours of delivery a year.

What needs to happen now

I am very aware that at the moment, this paper is only the result of my own reflection and thoughts. It is really important to me that all of those who are influenced by youth work provision in Southern Wiltshire

(the young people, their communities, decision makers and my staff team) have the opportunity to comment and share their views.

I am in the process of planning a consultation afternoon for young people on Saturday 15th June and this paper will be included in the papers for the Area Board Meeting on Thursday 6th June.

I am also looking to circulate this paper as widely as possible and would be most grateful for any views and comments. Please get them to me by 30th June as it is my hope that we can agree a way forward and implement it on 1st September.

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Tony Nye Youth Development Co-ordinator - Southern Wiltshire Community Area

E mail : tony.nye@wiltshire.gov.uk

Mobile : 07775 410523

Appendix A

Examples of possible delivery models (all sessions include 15 minutes at the start and end for staff preparation and evaluation so time spent with young people will be half an hour less than the time worked for each session)

Delivery example 1: TOTAL 1076.5 hours of delivery across the year.

1 lunchtime a week at Trafalgar School = 1.5 hours x 39 = 58.5 hours

1 lunchtime a week on the Laverstock Schools campus = 2 hours x 39 = 78 hours

2 sessions a week of support to the voluntary sector = 6 hours x 52 = 312 hours

2 sessions a week of outreach work across the villages = 6 hours x 52 = 312 hours

7 Summer Leisure Credit work days and 4 Autumn Reward trips = 6 hours x 7 + 10 hours x 4 = 82 hours

1 developmental project session a week (offering a variety of different projects through the year) including transport = 4.5 hours x 52 = 234 hours

Delivery Example 2: TOTAL 1078.5 hours of delivery across the year

1 lunchtime a week at Trafalgar School = 1.5 hours x 39 = 58.5 hours

1 lunchtime a week on the Laverstock Schools campus = 2 hours x 39 = 78 hours

2 sessions a week of support to the voluntary sector = 6 hours x 52 = 312 hours

7 Summer Leisure Credit work days and 4 Autumn Reward trips = 6 hours x 7 + 10 hours x 4 = 82 hours

2 developmental project sessions a week (offering a variety of different projects through the year) including transport = 9 hours x 52 = 468 hours

2 week long development projects at some point through the year = 40 hours x 2 = 80 hours

Delivery Example 3: TOTAL 1066 hours of delivery across the year

1 sessions a week of support to the voluntary sector = 3 hours x 52 = 156 hours

1 session a week of outreach work across the villages = 3 hours x 52 = 156 hours

7 Summer Leisure Credit work days and 4 Autumn Reward trips = 6 hours x 7 + 10 hours x 4 = 82 hours

4 Easter Leisure Credit work days and 2 Reward trips = 6 hours x 4 + 10 hours x 2 = 44 hours

2 developmental project sessions a week (offering a variety of different projects through the year) including transport = 9 hours x 52 = 468 hours

4 week long development projects at some point through the year = 40 hours x 4 = 160 hours