

YOUTH OFFER UPDATE

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1** This report provides an update on Sunderland's youth offer for children and young people and describes the work that will be undertaken in 2017/18 in relation to this following cessation of the commissioned funding to the voluntary sector and XL provision from 31st March 2017.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires the Council to secure services and activities to improve the wellbeing of young people aged 13-19 (and up to age 24 for those young people with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities).
- 2.2** The potential future benefits for young people through having access to additional opportunities and support are recognised, therefore the duty to the Council is described as being to "secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, equality of access for all young people to the positive, preventative and early help they need to improve their wellbeing". This includes:
- connecting young people with their communities, enabling them to belong and contribute and have a voice in decisions which affect them;
 - offering safe environments to take part in sports, arts, music and other activities to develop a sense of belonging, improve social skills and relationships with adults they trust;
 - supporting the personal and social development of young people to develop their capabilities for learning, work and adulthood;
 - improving their physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing;
 - helping those at risk of dropping out of learning or not achieving their potential to engage and attain;
 - raising their aspirations, building their resilience and informing their decisions – thereby reducing teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.3** Neither the services and activities to be provided, nor the level of funding are prescribed. The Local Authority's responsibility is described as "securing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer that is sufficient to meet local needs ... within available resources, reviewing the sufficiency of the offer in light of feedback and data that is indicative of wellbeing and personal and social development". The Government will launch a new youth policy statement in the coming months, setting out a road map until at least 2020.

- 2.4 The current youth offer meets requirements as set out above, with a range of services including:
- internally provided services (such as XL Youth Village);
 - externally commissioned contracts;
 - non commissioned services provided by the voluntary sector – these services may have a local remit, or a specific focus (such as the uniformed cadets);
 - a range of services available through open spaces and leisure facilities.
- 2.5 There are a range of opportunities to involve young people through participation arrangements including Youth Parliament; Childrens Trust Advisory Network; City Equals; Change Council; Annual Young People's State of the City Debate; and Schools Councils. The achievements of young people are celebrated throughout the year and specifically at the annual Young Achievers Awards Ceremony.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 For the past 11 years, youth work in Sunderland has been delivered through a commissioning model with voluntary sector providers. Over time, this has changed in response to need – for example moving from locality to ward based provision as well as including a provision for 8-10 year olds in addition to the provision for 11-19 and an offer that included holiday sessions. In the last 7-8 years the ward based sessions have been supplemented by Council funded services delivered at weekends, such as XL Youth Villages and Mobile Bus.
- 3.2 In 2014, the need to find financial efficiencies saw the introduction of greater flexibility for providers through minimum delivery contracts that meant a financial reduction of 30% for 8-10 year old provision and 20% for 11-19.
- 3.3 On this basis, contracts were extended for 24 months to 31st March 2017 – with 10 voluntary sector organisations offering a minimum of 1 session per week for 8-10 year olds and 3 sessions for 11-19 across 25 wards.
- 3.4 One off reserves were put in place to continue funding the XL provision to 31st March 2017.
- 3.5 Continued financial pressures has resulted in the proposal that both the XL provision and provider contracts will not be funded beyond the end of March 2017. This has resulted in:
- Voluntary Sector providers receiving formal notification in December 2016;
 - Council staff employed either by the VCS or in the XL provision having been given formal notice of redundancy.
- 3.6 In preparation for this, review activity took place across 2015 and 2016 to support the development of a revised youth offer. This included consultation with young people, members of the public, providers, elected members and other interested partners and organisations to determine levels of current access and satisfaction within the current service as well as the wider offer. The findings of this exercise can be found in Appendix One.

- 3.7 During this review, officers have also been working with VCS providers to support them to prepare for deliver with reduced funding. This “All Together Consortia” is made up of 13 youth organisations (including the 10 currently commissioned by the Council). It collaborates well to attract funding from external sources to provide youth activities over and above those funded by the Council.
- 3.8 The Council will continue to support the consortia to identify funding opportunities via the Grant Finder. Most recently, they have supported a bid to the Youth Investment Fund, which, if successful could bring significant funding to the VCS over a 3 year period.
- 3.9 Given the funding position, the next stage of the review is to identify and develop Sunderland’s wider offer of activities for Children and Young People. This will factor in those activities provided by schools, leisure centres, and a range of other social groups, including those sessions the VCS will continue to provide. An initial trawl has identified a sizeable number of activities already in place.
- 3.10 When the Government publishes its strategy for youth services in 2017, it is expected that it will look to target resources to those most in need and will require the voluntary sector to explore diverse income streams in order to increase impact. This strategy will inform the work done by the Consortia in Sunderland.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the report, an update to which will be submitted once the outcome of the Youth Investment Fund bid is known.

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Appendix One

Summary of Youth Offer Survey – April 2016

Demographics

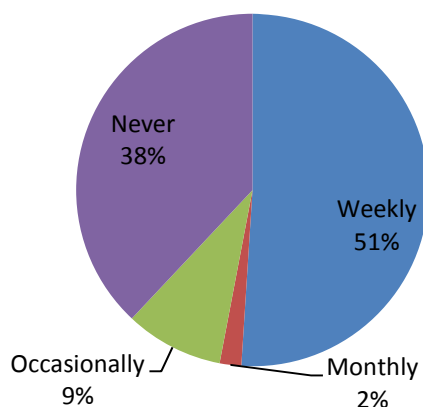
- During 2015/16, 13,240 8-19 year olds attended a Council funded youth provision – 7,652 of these attended 4 or more times – the reach of the service being 36% of the population.
- The 12-15 age range attend most regularly.
- Ethnicity across all age ranges is predominantly White British, with 2-3% coming from BME communities.
- In the 8-10 age range, 53% of attendees are male, 47% female. For 11-19, this changes to 61% male and 39% female.
- There were 1,367 respondents to the survey, 62% of which were members of a Youth Group.

Priorities

- The priority issues for the 8-10 age range were:
 1. Diet & health
 2. School issues
 3. Bullying
 4. Education
 5. Family
- And those for the 11-19 age range were:
 1. Education
 2. Diet & health
 3. School
 4. Environment
 5. Relationships
 6. Alcohol

Youth Group Attendance

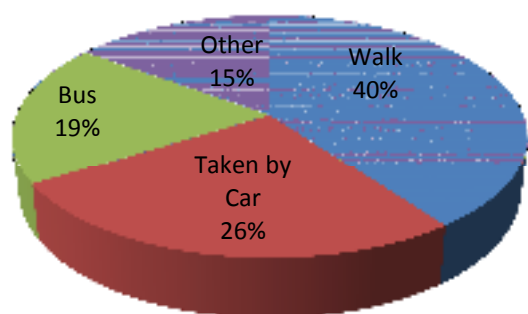
Frequency of Attendance at Youth Provision



When asked the type of activities, they attended, the most popular responses were Sporting Activities, Youth Groups and After School Clubs and the least popular were Employment, Uniformed and Church Groups.

Travel

Young people were asked how they travelled to their youth provision



The average travel time was 32 minutes.

Young people were asked how long they would be prepared to travel and while this ranged from seconds to hours, the majority were prepared to travel up to 30 minutes.

Timing of Provision

Young people were asked when they would prefer to attend youth provision.

Preferences were as follows:

1. Weekday evenings 23%
2. School holidays 19%
3. School term time 15%
4. Saturday day time 13%
5. Saturday evening 11%
6. Sunday day time 10%
7. Sunday evening 9%

Parent / carer responses, as well as those given by providers, mirrored the young people's preferences.

Reason for Attendance

The most popular reason for attendance was being with friends (38%), with somewhere to go (21%) and that they want to learn something different (17%) also being popular responses.

When asked what they wanted to get from activities, enjoyment was the most popular response (28%) followed by being in a safe environment (19%) and trying new activities or meeting new people (15%).

Parent / carer responses, as well as those given by providers, mirrored the young people's responses, but with a safe environment featuring slightly higher.

Reason for Non-Attendance

Those young people who do not attend a youth provision were asked why not, the primary responses to this were:

- they meet their friends elsewhere
- the provision is boring or that there will be nothing of interest.

Some described themselves as lazy or that they couldn't be bothered and others said they had other family commitments.

Residents Survey

- 47 residents responded to the survey.
- 60% stated that the youth services in Sunderland meets local need, whilst 40% responded that it does not.
- Of those that answered yes, many felt it was a good service, or that it was provided at low cost to families.
- Of those that answered no, the main issues were lack of provision in a particular area or funding cuts.

Provider Survey

- 26 providers responded to the survey.
- 73% stated they would like to offer additional activities.
- Those who do not wish to offer additional activities either felt that they already offered a wide range, or that they did not wish to duplicate good work done elsewhere.
- Those who do wish to offer more, indicated the following:
 - They have excellent facilities and a good track record of providing high quality services;
 - They are able to offer a wide range of activities in a safe environment;
 - The potential for further work with specific groups (BME) or around specific issues (NEET, health & lifestyle, behaviour);
 - They would like to maintain the excellent working relationship with the Council;
 - The need to develop responses to local need;
 - The potential to bring in additional funding (to compliment Council funding).