

Provision of Activities for Young People in Kent

Select Committee Progress Update June 2010

Introduction

This report outlines the progress against the recommendations made in the Select Committee Report into the provision of Activities for the Young People of Kent in March 2009. The Select Committee examined what kind of activities are on offer in Kent, where they are, how young people find out about them and what might be stopping them from taking part.

As a result of the interviews, discussions and visits undertaken by the Select Committee a set of 17 recommendations were developed. The recommendations are numbered (R1, R2, etc) as they appear in the original body of the report. However, the committee members prioritised the recommendations and therefore the order of this report reflects these priorities.

1.0 Recommendation R2

That KCC particularly through the Kent Youth Service and Extended Services continue to encourage and support schools in their efforts to develop extended services that compliment and supplement those already available in their local communities as an essential part of Integrated Youth Support in Kent.

To facilitate this, the Extended Services Team should explore how available funding could be utilised to ensure that schools are supported in their efforts to develop up to and beyond the core level of extended services by, for example:

- making extended school co-ordinators or community youth tutors available in more schools
- with colleagues in the Youth Service, developing expertise among School Governors and Head Teachers by providing training/presentations on extended service development and community engagement
- ensuring that information about extended services within Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) is gathered, recorded and made available to the public through various media (as outlined elsewhere in this report) and taken into account as an integral part of the Youth Strategy in every district
- with Youth Service Colleagues, encouraging and assisting schools to ensure there is effective and ongoing consultation with local communities (beyond the immediate school population) about the development of extended services

ensuring that the allocation and distribution of funding for extended services (routed LCSPs) is clearly recorded and made available to assist with planning for service provision within local communities.

1.1 Progress

1.1.1 During the past year two schools identified that they were unable to continue funding the Community Youth Tutor model, however this has opened the opportunity for other schools to participate in the model which has resulted in new posts at Folkestone Academy and potentially at another school in the Dover area. In addition the Sheppey Academy has reversed its position and recruitment for a new CYT is underway.

1.1.2 No further funding has been identified to develop this work, however Kent Youth Service is continually reviewing its service delivery and methods of working. As such funding for new CYT posts during 2010/11 may be identified through a review and reduction in dedicated Detached and Outreach projects.

1.1.3 Analysis of which members of staff require training and access to Togogo is underway. Once completed this will allow training on the redeveloped Togogo site for Extended Service Co-

ordinators and ensure that local information is kept up to date. This training will take place once the Children & Young People's Services Activities Database has been redeveloped along with Togogo.

- 1.1.4 A review of Youth Advisory Groups was completed, recommending a number of changes which will allow a wider, ongoing consultation with partners and young people about service development at a District level. These groups, which focus on the development of local services, will establish a strong working relationship to advise the new local Children's Trust arrangements on key issues 13-19 year olds, particularly the provision of positive activities.
- 1.1.5 An offer of bespoke training and guidance has been sent to all Governors and Head Teachers to both promote and respond to interest in how schools can be supported in developing the local offer to young people by working with both Extended Services and the Youth Service.

1.1.6 Overall some good progress but with more work to do.

2.0 Recommendation R3

That KCC together with district and borough councils should:

- a. proactively engage with rail travel providers in Kent to determine the feasibility, cost and business benefits of incorporating off-peak rail travel into the Freedom Pass to enable more young people to make use of existing activities and facilities.
- b. proactively engage with bus travel providers to determine the feasibility, cost and business benefits of adding integrated (perhaps specific nights of the week) later bus services to enable more young people to make use of existing activities and facilities.
- c. consider the benefits and potential cost savings of combining the Freedom Pass with any (future planned) Leisure Card and for example, Library card. This should be considered alongside the concept of rewards for positive activities (e.g. encouraging use of healthy activities).

2.1 Progress

- 2.1.1 A report on the progress of the Freedom Card was presented to Cabinet in November 2009. This report identified potential developments for the scheme. At this point in time rail travel remains unlikely to be included as the cost implications are too great and rail companies are unwilling to participate at this stage.
- 2.1.2 As the Freedom Pass has been rolled out across the county the Environment, Highways and Waste and bus service providers have been continually responding to service demands by putting on larger vehicles and extra services where necessary.
- 2.1.3 The Communities Directorate Finance team has undertaken a scoping exercise to determine the costs involved in implementing a Leisure Pass. Solutions for this could take on a number of formats and include a range of functions. The implementation of a smart card system which both the local authority and parents could contribute funds to would incur administrative costs of £25 per person to run (circa £3.25m for all 13-19yr olds) and could also involve significant capital investment to increase the network of smart card machines at participating venues (an initial investment of £1m was required to equip buses with smart card machines). Whilst this level of investment is unlikely the Youth Service and the Reward Team are currently examining whether the contract with Asperity to provide staff discounts could also source activity discounts with local providers by using the existing Freedom Pass.
- 2.1.4 Kent Youth County Council is currently researching the possibilities for a campaign to support the extension of the Freedom Pass to young people aged 16 and 17.

2.1.5 Progress against original recommendations is unlikely however work continues to achieve some change.

3.0 Recommendation R4

- a. That to fully utilise available transport KCC directorates should co-operate to produce a register of passenger carrying vehicles (minibuses) that could potentially be shared with the youth service and/or voluntary sector organisations for individual trips or on a more regular basis and that guidelines be produced for the use of such vehicles.
- b. That the Youth Service liaise with the Rural Regeneration Officer to determine whether links could be made to existing community transport schemes to provide assistance with transporting young people to leisure activities, or to investigate whether any joint funding arrangements could be of benefit.
- c. That there be a drive to recruit certified PC V drivers employed by KCC and partner organisations in Kent to register for occasional voluntary driving duties (subject to satisfactory CRB disclosure being in place) to assist the Youth Service's provision of sports/leisure activities to young people. Once established the Youth Service should assess the viability of extending the scheme to include affiliated and non-affiliated voluntary organisations.

3.1 Progress

- 3.1.1 Resources from Communities Directorate have been identified to undertake this task and work is currently underway to finalise a directory of available vehicles.
- 3.1.2 The change in the framework of policy and funding for Rural Regeneration has put significant pressures on existing Community Transport schemes and expansion without considerable investment is not realistic. The Youth Service and Rural Regeneration Team are working together to influence the Integrated Transport Policy in order to reflect the needs of young people in isolated communities.
- 3.1.3 A job description and recruitment process for volunteer drivers is currently being finalised and will be distributed via the Kent Volunteer network and also to partners through the district based Volunteer Driver networks.

3.1.4 Some progress made although more work to do.

4.0 Recommendation R6

That KCC (Youth Service and others) should work with district partners including those in the voluntary and community sector to build upon the success of events such as Gifted Young Gravesham, those organised by Blade and Youth of Generation and explore opportunities to hold similar events elsewhere in the county.

4.1 Progress

- 4.1.1 Kent Youth Service remains dedicated to the development of Young People through the arts and during 2009/10 a large number of arts events were hosted and/or supported by Kent Youth Service and its partners across the county. Gifted Young Gravesham was delivered successfully again this year with plans for a similar event, Dartford Is Gifted, well under way. In addition the Youth Service hosted a Rhythmix weekend residential experience for young people wanting to develop their performance skills. The Service has also hosted 6 Kick Racism Out of Football events and also 6 events to celebrate LGBT history month in February – at each of these events young people are able to take part in forum theatre and practice other performance skills. The Youth Service also hosts 8 Try Angle awards ceremonies each year which both celebrate young people's achievement and provide a platform for young people to perform.
- 4.1.2 On 15th of August 2009 the Youth Service hosted a partnership Summer Diversity Festival which was attended by more than 1400 young people who were able to take part in a number of cultural and sporting activities whilst more than 30 young people's acts were able to perform at the event

and take part in talent shows, battle of the bands and workshops. The intention to hold a similar event in 2011 is dependant on securing external funding to do so.

4.1.3 Progress complete

5.0 Recommendation R7

That KCC adopts a policy of promoting positive language, perceptions and expectations of young people in all KCC publications and communications and encourages and engages with partners and the media to further this aim.

5.1 Progress

5.1.1 A code of good practice has been established by the Communications and Media Centre to ensure that all departments recognise the importance of promoting a positive message about young people. This document can be found at Appendix 1 and it is recommended that this be adopted.

5.1.2 Progress complete

6.0 Recommendation R8

a. That meetings which are to involve young people are planned and structured in a young person-friendly format.

b. That Youth Advisory Groups focus on strategic planning in their districts and extend invitations to, and renews efforts to engage, private and voluntary sector facility and activity providers as well as potential funders, in order to create opportunities for mutually beneficial discussions at YAG meetings.

c. That KCC Members be encouraged to contribute towards local young people's transport funds from Members' Community Grants (and other available sources) to finance organised trips for young people from their local area, focusing on those who attend youth groups and projects.

6.1 Progress

6.1.1 The Youth Advisory Group Review established a new set of Terms of Reference for the groups, emphasising the importance of playing a key role in the strategic development of services for young people – and particularly positive activities – at a local level. As part of this review the Terms of Reference also requires the meaningful participation of young people and ensuring that they are able to engage fully in meeting structures.

6.1.2 KCC Members Community Grants contributed directly towards work with young people in a variety of ways throughout the 2009/10 year. Full details of the spend of Members grants are available through the Community Engagement Team.

6.1.3 Progress Complete

7.0 Recommendation R12

a. Development of Togogo could include:

- Clear links to leisure listings for specific areas of interest such as cycling, parks, sports
- Times dates of meetings/venue contacts
- How to contact local Kent Youth County Councillor and Local Members of the County Council (by postcode look-up)
- The facility to vote on youth-related proposals
- Continually providing the opportunity for and proactively seeking out private and voluntary providers to invite listing
- Interactive local maps showing private/voluntary/LA provision

- Requesting that schools signpost Togogo on pupil VLEs (virtual learning environments screensaver and enabled in favourite sites) thus reaching every schoolchild
- Advertising Togogo on the Freedom Pass/Kent Travel Card/Library Card
- Allowing additional and selected advertising on the website (directly leisure related) to generate revenue and show discount offers.
- Liaising with the Children's Disability Register co-ordinator to ensure that views and experience of disabled young people and their families help to make the site informative and relevant.

b. Following an initial reluctance by young people to engage with Togogo its effectiveness in reaching a range of young people from different areas and backgrounds should be measured before and after development of the site by using Mosaic to analyse users registering on the site with a postcode.

7.1 Progress

- 7.1.1 The re-development of Togogo has been significantly delayed due to the delays in completing the Kent.gov site – Togogo will be hosted on the same platform and by the same provider. The Youth Service has begun working with young people to identify views and opinions on developing the site however specific functional capabilities will not be clear until later in 2010.
- 7.1.2 In order to aid the development of the Togogo and the adjoining database a part-time administrator has been assigned the task of updated and improving data quality. This is particularly crucial as the Kent Resource Directory, which provided a significant amount of the information for Togogo, has been withdrawn from service.
- 7.1.3 A basic, voluntary survey has been running as a Polaroid on the existing togogo site asking for feedback on the ease of use and design of the site and also asking people to give their postcode to allow mapping against the re-developed site.

7.1.4 Slow progress with more work to take place

8.0 Recommendation R13

That KCC Innovations Team works with young people, supported by professional advisers to produce a policy and guidelines for the safe use of social networking sites (Facebook, Bebo etc) by young people, and that KCC work towards developing protocols for effective and appropriate use of social networking sites by youth work practitioners, other KCC staff and Members as well as members of Kent Youth County Council.

8.1 Progress

- 8.1.1 A new policy for Internet Usage in Youth Centres and projects has developed which gives clear guidelines on how young people should be supported to gain the benefits of online communities whilst remaining safe. Additional guidelines support staff in ensuring their own personal and professional usage is appropriate and safe.
- 8.1.2 A dedicated section of Knet gives clear guidance and direction on the use of Social Networking to promote KCC and its activities – in addition training to achieve a 'social media license' has been implemented allowing staff to achieve a corporate standard before using these tools.

8.1.3 Progress complete

9.0 Recommendation R15

That KCC should consider providing support to Oi! (provided there is a sustainable business plan) to enable more young people to benefit from the work experience and personal development it offers and for the magazine to reach and involve a greater number of young people across the county. This support might take the form of a regular advertising slot paid for by the Kent Youth Service and other directorates/service

(particularly CFE Extended Services) to: publicise activities and the availability of other local youth provision, and get across important messages e.g. links to advice on internet safety.

9.1 Progress

9.1.1 A variety of KCC departments have used SO! to promote activities and examine issues, these include Kent Apprenticeships, CFE Participation team, the HOUSE partnership project, Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Kent Sport Leisure and Olympics and Kent Youth Service. In addition the Try Angle Awards have become a national media partner of the magazine which involves a young person's story and nomination form being printed in each issue.

9.1.2 The Youth Service has offered support and guidance to, and material for, Nubia magazine a publication developed with a particular focus on BME young people and currently in it's 10th issue.

9.1.3 Progress complete

10.0 Recommendation R16

That the Youth Service increases its engagement with the diverse range of services provided by the voluntary and community sector to ensure that the contribution of this sector can be fully acknowledged, mapped and taken into account in planning positive activities within an area.

10.1 Progress

10.1.1 The completion of the YAG review and particularly the adoption of new terms of reference will allow an increased engagement with Voluntary Organisations in developing local services for young people.

10.1.2 Kent Youth Service has renewed its Partnership Awards with 23 different voluntary sector groups to deliver a range of direct youth work across the County and a further 10 groups to provide a range of support services to other Voluntary Organisations throughout Kent.

10.1.3 During 2009/10 the Youth Service facilitated 2 training courses focusing on developing the capacity to manage integrated services with 12 places taken up by leaders from Voluntary Youth Organisations.

10.1.4 Progress complete

11.0 Recommendation R1

That, as part of the comprehensive review of community library services, Libraries and Archives consider the role of mobile libraries as a means of engaging more young people in positive activities, and whether a change of timetable is a practical way of facilitating this.

11.1 Progress

11.1.1 The Library service provided strong and most consistent support for the innovative HOUSE project across each of the locations. Library staff have proven to be an exemplar in engaging young people in the potential future design of library services. The Library Service have provided young people with books that have assisted them with particular life events (such as bereavement, family changes) which have been invaluable to a number of young people and had a profound influence on young people's confidence, self-awareness and self-esteem.

11.1.2 Library mobile vehicles have recently become singled staffed making the engagement of young people more challenging through this avenue however consultation with over 1000 young people is being used to continually inform design and delivery of services and have produced three specific offers for young people designed to support them in looking for work, learning opportunities and gaining the best value from library services.

11.1.3 Progress complete

12.0 Recommendation R5

That the Youth Service and in particular the Diversity Team should liaise with the Analysis and Information Team to determine how Mosaic could enhance their work in terms of community profiling and targeting information. That the Analysis and Information Team determine whether Mosaic could incorporate data on Traveller communities.

12.1 Progress

12.1.1 The Youth Service is undertaking a pilot examination of two centres using Mosaic to examine its usefulness in supporting Community Needs Analysis processes. Appendix 2 shows the community profile around the two centres and once ContactPoint updates have been completed to the Youth Service MIS system postcodes will be extracted and mapped to examine where the Youth Club Members originate from.

12.1.2 Some progress with more work to do

13.0 Recommendation R9

- a. That projects with an intergenerational theme should receive a high priority in decisions about funding in Kent in order to break down barriers and build community cohesion.
- b. That KCC should consider how intergenerational activity could be supported in other ways such as through the Staff Club and Staff Discount schemes.

13.1 Progress

13.1.1 Kent Youth Service and partners prepared a bid for the 'Generations Together' programme which unfortunately proved unsuccessful. As a result the Service has included intergenerational work into its business planning processes. This has resulted in a range of activities taking place such as young people supporting Silver Surfers, Allotment Projects and intergenerational video projects examining the views of local young and older people.

13.1.2 Progress complete

14.0 Recommendation R10

That there should be increased opportunities for well motivated young people to shadow community leaders in order for them to gain experience of political life and leadership and that Members of Kent County Council should take a lead in facilitating this.

14.1 Progress

14.1.1 Workshadowing opportunities to work alongside Council Officers and County Councillors, including Cabinet Members have been taken up by 7 young people and students and this opportunity is on offer through Legal & Democratic Services as well as Kent Youth County Council. An offer for Members to shadow members of the Youth County Council has also been extended.

14.1.2 Progress complete

15.0 Recommendation R11

That Kent TV continues to provide young people with the opportunity to broadcast their interests and concerns and gain experience of TV and film production through the apprenticeship programme and the development of a dedicated broadcasting unit.

15.1 Progress

15.1.1 Kent TV was decommissioned at the end of the 2009/10 financial year and whilst this means that a 'youth channel' is not possible Kent Youth Service continues to offer young people a range of opportunities to engage in media and film activities and develop broadcast and production skills and experience.

15.1.2 No progress possible

16.0 Recommendation R14

That KCC should investigate the implementation of an SMS texting service to notify young people of discounts and offers of free access to leisure activities.

16.1 Progress

16.1.1 An SMS service exists and is available to use with the implementation of data handling processes to gain permission for the use of personal mobile phone numbers, however until such time as Togogo is redeveloped and/or future offers are able to be sourced through Asperity such a service would offer little value to young people. Resource to supply SMS services is yet to be identified.

16.1.2 Some progress with more work to take place

17.0 Recommendation R17

That KCC, with its partners, considers how to increase the proportion of activities, as well as information advice and guidance, provided to young people in young-person centred surroundings, in locations accessible during evenings/weekends.

17.1 Progress

17.1.1 During 2009/10 Kent Youth Service took part in the DCSF led 'Open Weekend' during which all areas opened provision during the weekend. Currently some Youth Service Provision in each operational area is open Friday evenings and Saturday in addition to the wide range of residential opportunities offered across the County.

17.1.2 Delivery of the partnership project HOUSE on the Move commenced in May 2010 taking advice, guidance and support to young people on Substance Misuse, Alcohol Abuse, Smoking Cessation and Sexual Health to a variety of locations around Kent and delivering services at times convenient for young people to access.

17.1.3 Connexions Kent & Medway Ltd has been awarded a new three year contract for the delivery of careers information advice and guidance with a requirement to examine how this can be done in closer integration with other partners and delivered in times and places where young people are keen to engage.

17.1.4 Progress complete

Conclusion

During the period covered by the Select Committee the engagement of young people in Positive Activities has increased from 65.5% to 67.3% (the DCSF target being 67% for 2009/10) and although it is difficult to measure the impact of individual recommendations on this target the direction of travel is healthy and reflects an improving picture of young people's engagement.

A number of the recommendations above continue to be valid for future development of services for young people. As noted above, some of these are able to be included in individual service business planning

processes. For items which require continued action, support and monitoring it is recommended that the Integrated Youth Support Services sub-group of the Kent Children's Trust board take an overview as this group offers the suitable strategic partnership setting in which to progress these recommendations further.