

Youth Work in Darlaston L.N.P. area

Youth work in Darlaston is provided by a partnership between Walsall Youth Service and the voluntary youth sector through Community Associations. The work takes place in line with the requirements of the local authority and national Youth Service expectations which are contained in the Department for Education and Skills booklet Transforming Youth Work Resourcing Excellent Youth Services and the Ofsted Framework for Youth Services.

The Youth Service works with young people predominantly in the 13 to 19 age group and provides opportunities for their informal and social education through a range of challenges and activities. The key principle of youth work is that young people are actively encouraged to become involved in decisions about their service.

The current service provided in the Darlaston LNP area is as follows:

Bentley Youth Centre

Youth Work sessions

Monday - Friday 7-9pm

Youth Work is undertaken at Bentley Youth Centre with young people aged 13-19 years of age.

Monday and Thursday 3.30-6pm

Youth Work is undertaken with young people with learning difficulties/ disabilities aged 13-19 years of age.

Youth Participation

Young people have also participated and been involved in the decision making processes with regards to the decoration of a room in the youth centre which will now be utilised as a project room.

There is a youth forum whereby five youth centre members attend the Local Neighbourhood Partnership Meetings to represent young people in Bentley.

Youth Work Projects

Various issue-based projects are undertaken with the participation of young people in regards to planning, delivery and evaluation.

There is a SWOP project where outreach workers meet with young people in areas where they congregate to engage them in centre based youth work activities

A Community Liaison Officer engages with adults to address issues with young people who are not engaging in any youth work provision.

Future Dates

The new sports barn will be opening on 23rd July 2005.

The fitness and dance suite, which has been developed with young people's participation will also be ready for 23rd July 2005.

Detached Youth Work

Detached youth work has taken place in the Bentley and County Bridge area and is due to be restarted when new appointments are made.

Moxley Peoples Centre Youth Club

The youth club sessions are undertaken on: Sunday 4 - 8pm
Monday and Wednesday 5 - 8.30pm

A Mosaic for the front of the centre has been designed and developed by young people working in partnership with the Community Arts Team.

Funding applications are being undertaken with young people.

A drama project will be undertaken with young people to address sexual health and drugs issues.

Young Women's Dance Group

A young women's dance group is being developed which will be lead by a young woman who will undertake training alongside support from a youth worker. This will be based at Rough Hay Community Room in Rough Hay Tenants and Residents Association and will positively encourage youth participation and responsibility.

Darlaston Youth Centre

See report below on the developments at Darlaston Youth Centre as an example of the range of activities that Youth Centres in the area are involved in.

Darlaston Youth Centre

Development at Present

Young People's Consultations

Darlaston Youth Centre consultations for the centre design, provision and programmes have been undertaken with young people in the local school, town centre, library, local areas, young people's homes for those unable to attend the centre as well as at the youth centre. These consultations are fundamental in the development of Darlaston Youth Centre and have identified youth work provision such as I.T suite, health and beauty projects, Arts, dance, music, sexual health provision and a young people's information access point. Issue based programmes have also been identified such as drugs, sexual health, one-to-one work, counselling, peer pressure, bullying, identity, race as well as the on-going development of the centre, resources and to develop the area at the back of the youth centre for leisure and recreational activities.

Youth Work Sessions

At present Youth Work sessions are undertaken on Tuesday and Thursday evenings with young people. A young women's group session is also undertaken and takes place on Saturday evenings. It is a process of developing trust and positive relationships with young people and encouraging their participation for them to take responsibility during sessions at Darlaston Youth Centre. Youth work sessions are also undertaken at the local school. Young people also will attend the youth centre in the day for one-to-one discussions around issues that affect them as well as support and information.

Senior youth club members take responsibility with the coffee bar and serve young people at the youth centre with refreshments as well as supporting youth staff with addressing issues and challenging junior youth club members with behaviour.

Young people have devised rules for Darlaston Youth Centre and these are actively implemented and adhered to. This has positively encouraged ownership and awareness of consequences with young people.

There is an information access point at Darlaston Youth Centre whereby young people are able to obtain information on a wide range of issues affecting them and also be supported.

Youth Staff Team

Four youth work posts have been advertised for part time posts at Darlaston Youth Centre, the short listing has been undertaken and two young people will be on the interview panel alongside Raqia Akhtar and Jan Madeley. The interviews will take place on 24th and 27th June 2005 at Darlaston Youth Centre. A volunteer is currently supporting the youth work sessions.

Mark Peters from the Birmingham Association of Youth Clubs (BAYC) is also based at Darlaston Youth Centre and he has supported sessions and will be undertaking evening sessions with young people.

Work with Agencies and Community Groups

Essentially contacts have been made with various agencies including the police, Sure Start, the schools, Domestic Violence Forum, Community Liaison Unit, the foyer, Darlaston Community Action Group, Darlaston On-line, Local Neighbourhood Partnership, Sexual Health services with a commitment to multi-agency work and partnership working on projects to holistically meet the needs of young people and improve the area of Darlaston.

Funding

Essentially funding applications have been undertaken with young people for the I.T suite and to upgrade the facilities as well as various projects. This will be an on-going process and Mark Peters (BAYC) will also be supporting young people with various funding applications.

Young people have identified the need to raise funds and will be participating in various fundraising opportunities to develop the centre. This will positively encourage youth participation, ownership and responsibility.

Youth Service Conference

Young people who have contributed to the development of the centre have been awarded a certificate for their outstanding contributions and commitment at the Youth Service Conference. This has been a positive experience for them as their achievements have been celebrated and awarded.

Darlaston Youth Centre Future Plans

Youth Participation

Young people will continue to be involved in all aspects of the centre design, development of programmes, funding applications and youth work provision to actively encourage their participation at all levels and for them to have ownership of the youth centre. Young people will be involved in painting and decorating the youth centre and its refurbishment.

Youth Work Sessions

The consultations and the youth work sessions have identified that issue based programmes are vital to explore gender issues, identity, violence, relationships,

behaviour, sexual health, drugs, peer pressure, bullying. All programmes and projects will be accredited. There will be specific men's and women's work undertaken with young people to address the issues. These will be undertaken with young peoples active participation and also working in partnership with various agencies.

Steering Group

A young men and young women's steering group will be formed where young people will take responsibility and be involved in the decision making processes at Darlaston Youth Centre. In addition to this young people at the centre will be educated and trained to become peer educators for them to positively support and educate other young people.

Gender Programme

A Gender Programme has been identified as a priority by young people and this will be undertaken working with a core group of young men and young women to address the issues affecting them. This will also be an accredited programme. We will work alongside the domestic violence forum and Arts workers as well as other agencies to devise a programme, which can then be delivered to other young people at the youth centre as a training programme to educate them. Joseph Leckie School have identified concerns with male students and the young people there will also be worked with both in school and at Darlaston Youth Centre to address the issues.

Training for young people

A core group of senior youth club members have identified youth work as a career and are also taking increased responsibility on youth sessions. They have expressed interest in undertaking training. Youth Awareness Training will be undertaken with these young people for them to be actively involved in the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of youth sessions as well as understanding the role of a youth worker and support the youth staff team.

Planning for Real Consultation

A planning for real consultation will be undertaken by young people at Darlaston Youth Centre. The plans for the youth centre are being devised presently and these will then be enlarged and young people will design various cards to represent various aspects, resources and programmes. Young people and members of the community will also be invited to Darlaston Youth Centre as well as other venues to take part in the consultation process and this is inclusive and will also then be part of a wider funding application to improve and develop the centre. This will also demonstrate to external funders how young people have been actively involved in consulting with other young people and members of the community to meet the needs holistically. Young peoples views, thoughts and ideas will then be put into practice which is the fundamental aim of the Planning for Real consultation.

Re-name the Youth Centre

Young people will re-name the youth centre working alongside Arts workers. This will also be a part of the planning for real consultation and this will ensure that all young people are actively involved in decision making at Darlaston Youth Centre.

Youth Work Sessions

With an established youth work team at Darlaston Youth Centre four sessions will be undertaken with young people. Various agencies will be worked with to establish youth provision during the day such as foyer and connexions. The school will also be worked with to address issues through various projects with young people. External funding will be applied for to establish youth provision in the day to ensure that it is inclusive for all young people. Significantly youth workers will also undertake youth work in other contexts such as detached and outreach work to ensure that that the service is inclusive for all young people as meeting the needs of young people is the fundamental priority.

External Funding

Young people will continue to participate in applying for various funding opportunities and fundraising activities and this will enhance their skills and will be on-going process.

One to One Room

External funding will be sought to develop a one-to-one room where counselling sessions can be undertaken where young people will have a safe therapeutic space to offload and talk about issues affecting them.

Open day

Darlaston Youth Centre is planning to have an open day where young people will lead in organisation and performance and we will invite young people, various agencies, professionals and members of the community to observe the work that has been undertaken and celebrate young people's achievements.

Area Projects

Darlaston Youth Centre will be undertaking various area projects with Moxley and Bentley Youth Centres and cultural awareness events to address the tensions and barriers that exist and also for young people to have new experiences and work alongside other young people.

Raqia Akhtar
Darlaston Youth Worker