

Executive Member for Leisure and Culture and Advisory Panel 5 December 2006

Report of the Assistant Director (Lifelong Learning and Culture)

School's Out: Progress Report

Summary

1. This report updates the Executive Member on the development of the School's Out programme. It offers an opportunity to assess the future development of the programme of activities.

Background

2. The School's Out programme is currently promoted through a newspaper style publication that provides a listing of available school holiday activities for 5 – 18 year olds and their families throughout the city. Six publications are produced each year, one for each school holiday period. To illustrate its growth it is useful to look at the attendance figures for the summer programmes since 2003, which were as follows:

2003 – 18,618

2004 – 23,718

2005 – 29,009

2006 – 36,231

3. The primary method of distribution for School's Out sees a print run of 18,795 delivered to primary, secondary and special schools throughout the city. In respect of Primary Schools the preferred method is to distribute at least one copy per family. Secondary schools have a lower take up of the publication. They currently average between 200 – 400 copies per school and on the whole rely on students picking up the publication for themselves from designated areas.
4. The publication is also available through libraries, community centres and other relevant groups who work with children and young people. The Play Team is constantly seeking to develop working relationships with existing distributing agencies and to create new partnerships where possible. Activities are also listed on the Yortime website and both the publication and the Yortime listings are available around 3 - 4 weeks before the start of each school holiday period.

This Year's Programme

5. As the School's Out programme has developed the number of participating children and young people has increased. Evaluation forms show that a significant number of young people are using the programme for the first time.

The increase in numbers is therefore attributable to both new users and existing users attending more events. The increase was also helped by some large one-off events.

6. We have formed new partnerships with a number of new providers during the summer including Global Youth and Junior mobile youth clubs who provided activities in various parks across the city. The ceramics course was also a huge asset to the programme and has featured in each programme since the summer. The group leader is committed and enthusiastic about working with children and young people with additional needs and behavioural issues and we have had a great deal of positive feedback from social workers who have attended the ceramics courses with their young people.
7. This summer the School's Out core funding was able to allocate £4,000 towards a week of activities designed specifically for all Looked After Children in the care of the authority. The week was organised by Maxine Benson (Special Educational Needs Development Worker – Early Years and Extended School) in partnership with Network2. This scheme illustrates how targeted work can be delivered which may not be advertised in the publication itself.
8. School's Out promotes the Youth Service. Space has been set aside in the Christmas issue to provide a mini-newsletter section detailing some of the work they are doing. The service also promotes the Street Sport York mobile sports and skate park service. As this service is also managed by the Play Team the project is able to be directly responsive to target areas of the city in liaison with Neighbourhood Pride team.
9. The School's Out programme worked with the Library Service during the summer in order to promote, The Reading Mission, York Libraries reading challenge for children aged 4 – 12.

Consultation and Feedback

10. School's Out continues to consult with its users through evaluation forms as the main source of obtaining feedback. Each activity organiser completes an evaluation form as well as giving a sample number of appropriately designed questionnaires to the children and young people to complete at the end of the activity. Questions are designed to assess customer satisfaction in relation to the range and provision of activities, availability of the programme, areas of improvement and levels of enjoyment. This information is fed back into the planning to ensure the programme continues to meet the needs of the target audience. An example of this is the request for more trampolining. By working in partnership with Oaklands Sports Centre The Play Team were able to offer this activity from Easter this year in each holiday period.
11. Summer 2006 feedback from children and young people included:

What children and young people liked about School's Out?

"The leaders were brilliant. They were very kind and helpful and made the week an enjoyable experience for all. Also the fact that we were a small group made it easier to gel."

Female 14 Huntington School – Attended Pilot Theatre Workshop

"Getting a taste of my future career"

Male 16 Fulford School – Attended The Jam Factory Music Taster Course

"You got to do everything including tying ropes. You got lots of goes at climbing"

Male 8 Clifton Primary – Attended Indoor Climbing

What children and young people didn't like about Schools Out?

"We went slightly wrong in the end performance, which was a shame after all our hard work"

Female 12 Joseph Rowntree School – Attended Box of Delights Drama Course

"My tail on my tortoise fell off two times"

Female 7 St. Peters Primary – Attended Ceramics with Ann Johnson

"When I went wrong. I like my art to be perfect"

Female 11 New Earswick – Attended New Earswick Summer Scheme

12. As a result of the feedback and also the Play Team's continuing involvement in the Looked After Children's steering groups it was agreed that the School's Out programme should be sent electronically to all those professionals working with children and young people at risk of social exclusion before the publication is available in school's and libraries. This allows professionals to have the extra time that is needed to organise the necessary arrangements with parents/carers to give these young people a chance to book on their chosen activities
13. Feedback from professionals involved in working with targeted groups of young people and those in the care of the local authority were asked how they used the summer 2006 publication. The following are two examples of feedback:

"I have given a copy to a few young people to peruse at their leisure with carers and to encourage them to do something. As I tend to know their interests it can be useful to point out things to them and as a conversation starter about social activity, hobbies etc and sometimes YP's surprise me by pointing out a new interest. Sports activities and drama are programmes my YPs have used and they have been positive about them afterwards. I think this is a great resource."

Silvia Harding (Social Worker, Hollycroft.)

"The activities on offer are wide and varied. I used it with a 15year old male - he chose for himself on what interested him. I also used it with a young person who was placed in respite during the summer holidays. We looked through the brochure but could not access any places on what was probably the most popular activities they had all gone. It's clear about what skills the children need which saves time

but it is a lot to digest for some young people! Also it would be helpful to receive the brochure in advance of it going out then this would give us time to organise what needs to be done & often gaining parental consent takes time.”

Emma Waddington (Social Worker, Hollycroft.)

14. During the summer there were a small number of activities that were cancelled due to low take up numbers, primarily art activities. In response to this some funding was reallocated to provide a more targeted arts project with the Youth Inclusion and Support Panel (YISP) at the October half term. The YISP service, linked to the Youth Offending Team specifically works towards early intervention and support for children and young people who have been identified as being at risk of offending behaviour. The arts project worked alongside the YISP workers during the activity who provided extra support for the young people. This activity was a great success and it was fed back to us that:

“There are benefits for this group of children by participating in a group art activity. These include: concentration, greater self-esteem, learning new skills, responsibility and tolerance. The children want more of this and some regular activity needs to be set up. We want to make this a priority in our future work and as we really enjoyed working with them.”

Alison Williams and Lynn Peacock – Art and About.

15. During the delivery of the summer publication The Play Team were able to visit the schools and talk to the school administration staff, who are responsible for its distribution within schools. It was interesting to discover that some primary schools use the publication as a learning tool for literacy. Many of the administration staff also welcomed the publication and told us of how their own children attend some of the activities. However, distribution of School's Out though the school continues to be a problem in a small number of establishments. Feedback, particularly in secondary schools, is that pupils often litter the school grounds with the publication, leaving some schools reluctant to distribute them via pupils.

16. Feedback from 200 children who participated in the Library Service Summer Reading Challenge reported that they:

- Developed literacy skills, such as, reading faster and reading at a higher level.
- Learnt positive new attitudes towards books, reading and libraries.
- Gained a wealth of knowledge and information from the books they read.
- Developed positive new reading behaviours – such as choosing books for themselves and sharing their reading with their families.
- 58% stated that they enjoyed reading more after the Reading Mission than they had done before.
- 78% read more books over the summer because of the Reading Mission than they would otherwise have done.
- 46% had been discussing their reading more because of the Reading Mission.

Learning Points

17. The fact that some activities were undersubscribed this year suggests that we may be reaching a point where there are now sufficient activities to meet demand. In these circumstances, if we were to commission more holiday activities, especially from the private sector, we could damage the viability of the existing out of school clubs and youth organisations that exist throughout the year through excessive competition during the holiday period. A balance is needed between developing the programme and supporting voluntary and community organisations to encourage the development of quality provision, enabling them to compete with outside agencies and each other.
18. It is recommended that rather than attempting to expand the programme further more concentration is now placed on meeting the needs of those least likely currently to participate. In practice this may mean using some of the School's Out funding to support existing voluntary and community groups in a slightly different way. Rather than simply providing a grant to underwrite a particular programme we might buy subsidised places on that programme to target groups of children and young people. The aim would be to enable activities to become more accessible and affordable. Children and young people might be referred from a number of agencies to take up these places.
19. **Marketing:** An option explored for the promotion of the summer 2006 programme utilised an advertising opportunity through the Press. A pull out magazine, "Summer's In", was produced by the Press which focused on activities drawn from the main School's Out programme. It was aimed at secondary school aged young people and was put together in partnership with the Youth Service. The publication was distributed as a pull out section of the Press and delivered via the Neighbourhood Pride Unit to a number of targeted wards in the City. There was limited evidence to show the impact of the Summer's In magazine. Feedback shows that the School's Out magazine is still the preferred method of finding out about activities. Again, it is recommended that the Play Team's focus should be more on those young people least likely to be able to access the current programme.
20. In Easter 2007 the Play Team plan to pilot a DVD scheme, which looks to provide the School's Out publication in a DVD disc format. It will be produced as an alternative method of reaching the older age group and piloted in one of York's secondary schools and will be made available to all students. Consultation packs will be going out to all secondary school councils that will encourage them to take more ownership of the promotion of School's Out within their schools. There will be a prize of a free Street Sport York session on a lunchtime in the school who comes up with the best ideas. The school councils will then be encouraged to put into practice what they have come up with. A home on the Internet will be established through the Children's Information Service website in the coming year.

Corporate Objectives

21. The School's Out programme continues to contribute to the 5 Outcomes of the Every Child Matters as outlined in the Children's Services Plan 2006-09. It offers a diverse range of active, educational and enjoyable activities that

children and young people may benefit physically, socially and emotionally from being involved in.

22. The School's Out programme provides support and guidance to organisations to assist in the development of new and existing opportunities for children and young people. All activities listed in the programme are checked to ensure that the organisation has the appropriate policies and practices in place and that they are guided and encouraged to become a member of the YorOk community.

Implications

23. **Financial** - The School's Out programme is funded through the Council's core budget and currently stands at £95k. It is anticipated that the budget will remain the same next year but as no allowance for inflation will be provided in the budget process it will be reduced in real terms.
24. **Equalities** – All activity providers who contribute to the programme continue to be assessed in terms of their equal opportunities policies and are encouraged to join the YorOK community. Activity providers are supported to enable children and young people with disabilities to attend mainstream activities. The Play Team has an allocated Cultural and Diversity Worker who is able to link Black and Minority Ethnic families children and young people to relevant providers. The Play Team continues to pursue the best possible opportunities for children and young people at risk of social exclusion through partnership working with the Special Educational Needs Development Worker, Looked after Children steering groups, Youth Inclusion and Support Panel and Children's Services at Hollycroft.
25. There are no HR, legal, crime and disorder, or IT implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

26. That the Advisory Panel and the Executive Member comment and advise on the future development of the programme
Reason: To enable the School's Out programme to continue to develop, supporting existing activity providers and utilising the private sector, to develop a comprehensive programme of activities and to meet the needs of those most at risk of exclusion.

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Report Approved **Date** 17.11.2006

Chief Officer's name
Title

Report Approved **Date** *Insert Date*

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report