

**AGENDA 11, Enc viii) Draft Report of the Detached Youth Work Liaison Meeting, held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023, at 12noon at the YMCA, Ashington**

**PRESENT**

Rob Cox (CEO YMCA), Danielle Ramsay (Senior Youth Work Practitioner), Cllr Louis Brown, Cllr Lynne Grimshaw, Sgt Paul Davis.

**1. CHAIR FOR THE MEETING**

It was AGREED that Rob Cox would chair the meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were given for Cllr John Tully and Inspector Wayne Daniels.

**3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None.

**4. DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**5. OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS HELD TO DATE**

Detached sessions commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 and there have been 345 engagements. Due to the nature of detached work, names are not always taken, or are nick names so it isn't always possible to ascertain that each recorded interaction is a different person.

The areas young people (YP) are being engaged in are beside the leisure centre, McDonalds, Hirst Park, People's Park, Station Road, and The Circle (the area at the entrance to Ashington Woods).

YP are gathering in larger groups than would have previously been expected, often 30, as different friendship groups mix.

YP are travelling into Ashington from outside the area; Gateshead, Durham, Cambois, Blyth and Bedlington. The YMCA is a draw, as is the £1 bus fair and the ease of communication between YP from different areas.

A higher % of males have been engaged during detached youth work.

Youth workers have suggested activities that YP may like to attend, including the YMCA, but often they just want to hang out, and be outside.

**6. SESSION MONITORING INFORMATION**

More detailed monitoring information will be available at the next liaison meeting.

**7. SIGNPOSTING AND/OR REFERRALS**

Signposting and referrals require sign-up and parental consent so can be difficult. YMCA has moved to drop-in approach; the positive is that the barrier to attending has been removed, but the negative is when behaviour exceeds challenging and becomes disruptive to others.

The YMCA are welcoming and accept the challenges that YP face, and are definitely more tolerant than some, but they also need to ensure they maintain a safe space for all users.

YP report not feeling welcome in Ashington, so some of the spaces that are open are not open to them (leisure centre/library) but many simply do not want to engage with and just want a space to be with friends. The YMCA is one of the only spaces that this can be accommodated. Real Deal Plus do offer a youth café.

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### **8. OUTCOMES**

It is early days but there have been increased numbers accessing YMCA because of contact made during detached youth work. Additionally, there is a greater collaboration with shops. Youth Workers will speak to McDonalds, Home Bargains, Ashington Leisure Centre, and remind YP that their behaviour in these spaces reflect how they are received at YMCA, in a bid to teach about the consequences of negative actions.

The Police report more positive intervention with letters home following incidents of ASB. Links with Escape Family Support and the Information Sharing Agreement with YMCA demonstrate how different organisations are working together.

### **9. BARRIERS TO YOUTH WORK TAKING PLACE**

It is clear the world that YP exist in today is very different, and YP are very different. Many factors were discussed that could be seen as a barrier to good youth work taking place, however, they are part of the landscape now and youth work must happen within this new environment.

- Coming out of COVID, the social skills and confidence of many YP is quite low.
- Many YP are waiting for diagnosis in regards their mental health or neurodivergence; support not being available until after diagnosis.
- Many YP are medicated because of neurodivergence, and after periods of concentration at school look for an outlet, not necessarily a positive outlet.
- YP spend a lot of time on phones and devices; there is an impatience and need to be constantly stimulated. Activities that may have previously worked in a youth setting are not as welcome; some young people would rather be on their phones.
- YP feel unwelcome, judged, alienated, but sometimes this is their own perception of how others see them, not the reality. It was discussed that there is a misconception that all YP are trouble, but there is also a misconception on the part of YP that all adults judge them like this.
- Generally, the coping skills of YP are less robust than previous generations. Those working with YP follow the [THRIVE](#) approach and are focusing on [TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE](#).

### **10. TARGETED YOUTH WORK**

The detached youth work has only been delivered for a few weeks, but youth workers expect to make suggestions for targeted youth work going forward.

Rob asked if the shortfall of sessions due to the late start could be used to deliver more sessions in the summer. Sarah confirmed that £20,000 was set aside for this work so could be spent, and there should be no issue providing sessions were itemised in the invoice (£185/detached session). Additionally, a proposal for additional targeted youth work could be brought, if within the budget available.

### **11. OTHER MATTERS**

Details of incidents of vandalism and graffiti on Ashington Town Council assets have been shared with YMCA. There have been 23 reports of more than 23 incidents since April, and more offensive graffiti in the last couple of weeks. Where appropriate incidents have also been reported to the police and have been raised with schools.

### **12. DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

To be agreed. *Suggestion – w/c 18<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023*