

Frome Youth Services Research

Vision

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Vision – summer 2016?

It is dusk one August in summer 2016, a week into the long school summer holidays. In Victoria Park playrangers are still packing up their equipment after the latest of their planned summer activities. Today around 30 children attended from all over Frome – working together and forming new friendships whilst building a den. Walking up the path to the park are the two detached youth workers, who will be working in and around the park and Welshmill tonight to engage and support young people. They know most of those they will see tonight by sight and want to talk about putting in some new youth shelters into public places within Frome. They are also planning to tackle the issue of a small group who are being consistently ostracised by the others. They have their mobile youth kit back in their van, including hot chocolate and biscuits, playing cards, a football, information leaflets about apprenticeships, contraceptives, and sign up forms for the c-card scheme.

Young people are checking into their twitter feed to find out which of the network of venues the next Friday night youth activity will be held, and how they can get tickets for the next big music event at the Cheese and Grain, organised by the Youth Council. The Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor are on their way to a meeting at the town council to present the results of the budget review of grant funding for youth activities that the youth council undertook. At home, Alex (14) and his mum are looking at the information about clay pigeon shooting that he was given by the Give it a Go scheme. He has taken part in this before and loved it and the instructor told him he was really good – but his family has never been able to afford for him to go regularly. He has been told that there is a session being organised on Saturday and he and his friends have been invited to attend free of charge.

Tonight, the residents group at Welshmill are meeting to discuss the offer they have received from the town council for some funding and support to put on a youth club in an empty local shop. A group of teenagers from the estate are leading a campaign for more to do in their local area and with the support that is available, this is starting to look like a real possibility.

Resources required

In order to achieve this vision, I recommend that FTC should:

1. Invest in a youth work co-ordinator/ facilitator (Full time equivalent) who can identify unmet need, provide flexible youth activities according to need across the town, and make better use of existing youth spaces. Resulting provision should include:
 - Holiday activities

Appendix 1

- Play days
- Youth club nights (in different neighbourhoods, according to need)
- Detached work (working with young people on the street or in parks)
- Outreach (to engage young people with existing services)

This co-ordinator would also:

- Provide support to local voluntary organisations through training and management advice
- Undertake quality assurance of provision run by new groups

This investment could be on a two year basis initially, as a 'pilot' period. However I recommend that FTC recognise that it is unlikely that this funding can be found from other voluntary sources in the current economic/ political climate, so it is recommended that FTC understand that the investment required may need to be sustained, if it produces good outcomes for children and young people.

2. Set criteria for future grant funding for children and young people, to encourage the following type of provision:
 - Support for young people's stated desire for places to go and things to do;
 - supports young people's access to activities they are interested in;
 - Encouraging inter-generational relationships;
 - Maintaining play provision;
 - Protects important services such as post natal groups, the toy library and the young carers group which may be at risk;
 - Maintains the development of youth voice in decisions that affect young people.

Success criteria

Greater investment in youth services will be judged to be a success if, at the end of two years, the following success criteria have been met:

- All young people in Frome have access to at least two hours per week of recreational activity in their leisure time, that is accessible and affordable
- All young people in Frome have access to at least two hours per week of sporting activity in their leisure time, that is accessible and affordable
- A repeat consultation of young people finds that there is increased satisfaction with things to do and places to go in the town
- A repeat mapping of youth provision in Frome reveals an increase in neighbourhood provision

Young people should be involved in judging whether these criteria are met.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this investment for Frome will be:

- Young people will have improved social and emotional capabilities such as self confidence, creativity, planning and problem solving

Appendix 1

- Young people will be better equipped for the work of work or for further study
- There will be greater community cohesion in the town
- There will be increased engagement and participation in community structures by young people

Background, research findings and further recommendations can be found in the Youth Services report, copies from Tessa Hibbert: tessa@trhibbert.demon.co.uk