

## Agenda item 4

### For information - Children and Young People's Project Update

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#### Summary

Over the last year the project officers Jess and Hannah have made great progress in working with partner organisations, residents and children and young people to identify and fill the emerging gaps in services in Frome. The first year of the project (August 19 to August 20) has been a jointly funded project with MDC and SCC.

This report provides a summary of the work to date and intended next steps.

#### Work to date

##### 0-5 year olds

We have identified that voluntary organisations and businesses provide a wide range of opportunities for families to participate in early years activities, many of these are accessible and affordable. There is however an emerging gap in early identification of families who might benefit from 'assistance before crisis' support.

Over the coming year we will continue to monitor the impact of the withdrawal of the level 2 Get Set Service, develop a training programme to support practitioners in early identification and signposting skills, develop a local signposting and information service.

##### 5- 12 year olds

Whilst there are some holiday childcare providers which operate across the town particularly over the summer holiday period, we have identified a lack of opportunity for young people in this age group, particularly 9 – 12 year olds, to participate in positive activity supported by trained practitioners outside of school.

There is also a particular gap for disabled children and young people. We have worked with SCC Short Breaks service, Critchill School, and the POD youth group to ensure sustainable holiday provision is created for disabled children and young people. We have also worked with Nova Sports and Purple Elephant to support the development and delivery of affordable inclusive holiday opportunities and scoped the potential for additional holiday play provision in our parks and open spaces.

We have created a summer holiday activity programme with Wiltshire Outdoor Learning, on standby should covid-19 restrictions allow and have commissioned Super Pirates to deliver a series of Roaming Play opportunities. We will continue to explore the role and availability of play rangers for Frome.

## 12 – 18 year olds

There has been particular concern about supporting young people aged 12 – 14yrs in Frome in recent years. Practitioners, community groups and other organisations have also identified this cohort as a key area of focus. We held a consultation event for young people so they could tell us more.

We have trialled a detached youth project, where youth workers engage with young people on streets and in open spaces in the town, initially funded by FTC and subsequently by Live West Housing association. We have now commissioned this to run until the autumn and have a £10k budget secured through the People's Budget to commission a wider detached youth work project. This has now gone out to tender and we will consult young people to make the final decision on which organisation will run this project.

## VRU project

During this period FTC were successful in securing £10k funding from the Violence Reduction Fund, building on our pilot of detached youth work, a police fund is aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour in young people. It was used to deliver a series of activity focused opportunities for targeted young people considered at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour with a particular emphasis on engaging young people aged 10 – 14 years. The sessions were coordinated by FTC and delivered and supported by a range of partner organisations including Frome Learning Partnership, the YMCA Mendip, Wiltshire Outdoor Learning, Kiwi Parkour, Young Somerset, and Speakeasy.

We have now supported four projects to apply for the second round of funding from the VRU. A referred-in family activity project and a series of detached youth work sessions were successful in receiving funding totalling £6,990.

## Make It Happen

This year FTC ran the 5<sup>th</sup> annual youth conference for all year 8 pupils in the town where we delivered the event over two days providing practical workshops and facilitated sessions aimed at engaging young people in practical action and planning for future projects in the town. This year young people were also involved in shaping the PB Youth Project which will be commissioned over the summer. We will work with Frome College to involve the (now) Year 9 pupils in the decision making panel for this bid.

## Information provision: Family Connect

We have learnt that there are significant gaps for parents, carers and practitioners in the information and signposting to services available in Frome. Modelling a new information service on the Mendip Health Connections service we are working towards the development of Family Connect, a support and information service for children, young people, and their families.

Whilst mapping the available services we have worked towards building a more comprehensive and accessible set of data which will be shared through our website and information service for families over the coming year.

During the last three months we have learnt more about how a two tier information service can work with a second line support service available to provide more detailed support and advice linking with partner organisations, statutory services and providing bespoke advice and support for residents. We will build on the strong working relationship that we have formed with Frome Learning Partnership to help shape and share this service.

### Training and networking for practitioners and interested residents

We have now launched our LINK + LEARN programme with the first in a series of topic-based training and networking sessions. The first session in the series took place on Monday 13 July (having been rescheduled and moved online to due to covid-19) and had a focus on play. It was well attended by residents and organisations with a range of backgrounds and specialisms: play work, youth work, forest school, EAL, SEN, etc. A summary of this meeting and suggested themes for a future play strategy for Frome can be found [here](#).

### Covid-19

Since March 2020, our CYP projects officers have been redeployed to support the delivery of Shop for Me and Fruber Eats Covid-19 response services for local residents; managing and matching volunteers to shop for local residents. As we move out of lockdown we are still seeing a need to continue the Shop For Me service and are working with a local voluntary organisation to consider how they might take on the service in order to increase our capacity to resume work on the above projects. We received funding from Somerset Community Foundation to support additional hours for one CYP PO to manage volunteers.

During this time, the projects officers have maintained and developed their work with partners to continue to develop access to services and other opportunities for children and young people. Unfortunately, due to the financial impact of Covid-19 MDC and SCC are unable to commit additional funds to supporting this area of work, however, they would like to remain partners with a view to exploring future funding opportunities.

### Next steps

We aim to prioritise:

1. Family Connect and anticipate higher engagement in a service that is at a town level and that is co-produced by professionals and families themselves; starting with a virtual offer and moving towards considering bespoke support for families and individuals modelled on the Mendip Health Connections service and building on our work to support Neighbourhood Networks.
2. The development of the Link and Learn training to promote community signposting and support.

3. A Play Strategy for Frome: we plan to commission from existing budgets a participative, inclusive, play strategy for Frome in the Autumn of 2020. Our aim is to create a playful town for children, young people, and adults alike that builds on new and existing initiatives providing social, physical, emotional, educational, and intellectual development opportunities for all. It will consider and address issues of access and equalities with a focus on spaces for play, the role of fixed play and recreational equipment and people both professional and residents.
4. An audit of need post covid-19: as children and young people return to school in September practitioners will start to see the potential impacts of lockdown and where arising gaps in services might be addressed. This audit will complement and update the initial work to map provision in Frome and feed into the Family Connect information service and future planning.

### Community Development

Since March 2020 we have seen a rapid rise in the number of street groups in Frome and have been successful in securing a six month Lottery grant to increase our capacity to support these groups to come together, share ideas and build stronger networks across Frome. In order to deliver this project Hannah Stopford, an experienced community development worker, has been seconded across from her role as Children and Young People's Projects officer to Community Development Projects Officer. Rather than backfill the role for this period we will commission the two discrete pieces of work described at three and four above to ensure there are no gaps in delivery for the children and young people's project work. In turn, the work to support street level activity in Frome will complement our ambition to see more streets Playing Out, engage residents in a play strategy for Frome and support community signposting and support for children, young people, and their families.

We will bring an update on the wider Neighbourhood network development to a future Town Matters Committee meeting over the autumn / winter period.