



## **Evaluation of Young People's Fund**

### **Year 5 Case Study Appendix**

GEN

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

England Case Studies .....	3
Case study example England 1: SOLE (Shout out Loud Everyone).....	3
Case study example England 2: Me Time Project .....	7
Case study example England 3: Talent Studio .....	11
Case study example England 4: The Centrepoint Youth Parliament.....	14
Scotland Case Studies.....	17
Case study example Scotland 1: Friends of the Award Edinburgh (FOTA).....	17
Case study example Scotland 2: The Chill Out Zone (COZ) .....	20
Case study example Scotland 3: Granton Youth Centre Youth Peer Leaders in the Community .....	23
Case study example Scotland 4: Dumfries and Galloway Befriending Project.....	26
Northern Ireland Case Studies.....	29
Case study example Northern Ireland 1: The Armagh Travellers Support Group .....	29
Case study example Northern Ireland 2: Youth Arts / Ealaín na bPáistí .....	32
Case study example Northern Ireland 3: Youth at Risk Programme .....	35
Case study example Northern Ireland 4: NICHS Community Training Project.....	38
Wales Case Studies.....	41
Case study example Wales 1: EMPHASIS .....	41
Case Study example Wales 2: SIGNPOST (Powys Drug and Alcohol Centre).....	45

## England Case Studies

### Case study example England 1: SOLE (Shout out Loud Everyone)

#### Young People's Fund Award of £136,500 (Grants to Organisations)

**Description:** The Youth Project @ Apostles' and Cuthbert's received funding to engage young people in detached and project based activities including a youth forum in a deprived part of Manchester. The project was intended to allow young people to have an active role in the organisation's planning, delivery and management. Support for SOLE formed part of the organisation's overall funding award. The project ran from 2008 to 2010. This case study focuses on actively involving young people in project delivery.

**Introduction:** The Youth Project @ Apostles and Cuthberts (YPAC) was launched in 2005. The organisation operates from the Church of the Apostles in Miles Platting (East Manchester). The area is characterised by high levels of school drop out, alcohol misuse and a declining population. Challenges for young people are compounded by the lack of facilities catering for their needs. YPAC was set up to address these challenges by offering a wide range of activities for local young people.

**The Project:** SOLE (Shout Out Loud Everyone) is a youth forum that gives young people responsibility for the planning, delivery and management of YPAC's activities. Funding allowed recruitment of a new outreach/detached worker to engage young people and identify the activities they wished to deliver. The post helped to increase the project's profile within the community, attract new attendees and provided additional capacity to deliver a wider range of activities.



SOLE involves young people in all elements of YPAC's operations including:

- development of the youth forum
- running youth forum meetings
- attendance and participation at management committee
- recruiting new staff members
- organising fund raising events
- preparing funding bids
- preparing a comment form to get feedback and planning activities in response.



Between 8 and 13 young people now attend each SOLE meeting. There has been a core of five members since the start. SOLE members are very aware of financial pressures on the organisation. They have prioritised activity and found new ways to raise funds, including fund raising events and a trial introduction of fees for drop-in sessions (set at just 20p to ensure they were affordable).

Two young people were fully involved in the development of a three year Strategy Plan to guide activities post March 2010. This exercise built on the knowledge they had gained through the YPF supported project, including understanding the project's financial position, management processes and the needs of their peers, as well as skills such as team working, listening and report writing. Interest in joining SOLE continues to grow.

**Partnerships:** SOLE is internal to YPAC, requiring no partnership working in its own right. YPAC as an organisation do have links with partner organisations including local schools, City in the Community (the Manchester City Football Club community initiative) and an East Manchester wide forum.

**Beneficiaries:** SOLE members previously participated in YPAC's activities but did not have an active role in project planning and delivery. Their involvement in the Youth Forum has created benefits above pure attendance. Staff reported increased confidence, growing commitment and motivation among young people who now develop their own ideas unprompted.



Stacey<sup>1</sup> has been Chair of SOLE for three years since being elected by her peers. SOLE has helped to build her confidence and overcome a stutter. She recently presented at a Church Urban Fund event which she would not have considered doing before the project. Although Stacey has faced challenges in other parts of her life she has remained committed to SOLE. She commented:

“SOLE kept me out of trouble. I dropped everything else in life, including college, but this kept me on the straight and narrow.”

When Stacey dropped out of college she started going to the centre every day. She started a maths GCSE with support from staff and helped a younger member to achieve an ASDAN award. Other young people also now go to Stacey for advice, further building her profile and confidence. Her experience

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<sup>1</sup> Names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

of the project has made her realise that she would like to work with young people.

Another young member of the youth forum commented on his experience. Mohammad was not sure what a youth forum was but joined SOLE to improve his job prospects. Mohammad said:

“I thought it was going to look good on my CV and give me a clear idea what I wanted to do.”

Mohammad is now Vice Chair. His role within the forum has been discussed at interviews and he feels it has helped him get a job. He recently achieved promotion as a result of taking on more responsibility; a skill he says was developed through SOLE. SOLE has also provided a constant in Mohammad’s life during a time of great change. He said:

“SOLE made me who I am. Five months ago I had no job, didn’t want to go to college, had nowhere to live, was in debt so lots of problems but I still came to SOLE. If I hadn’t been here I don’t know how my life would have been.”

Mohammad is now 19 and is moving from being a participant at YPAC to being a volunteer, building on his skills. He is going to help a new Chair and Vice Chair of SOLE move in to their roles.

Emma has attended activities at YPAC for six years. She was an early member of SOLE but was asked to leave due to inconsistent attendance and disruptive behaviour. She later returned on a probation basis and is now a core forum member. As a result of her involvement Emma has gained a number of personal benefits. Emma commented:

“I was shy and didn’t like mixing with people but now I can. Before I would go out on the streets, now I wouldn’t know where to go if I wasn’t here.”

Emma’s growing confidence has allowed her to take part in shows and video production. She also hopes to volunteer at the centre in future.

### **Learning and success factors:**

**It is all about relationships:** Young people need to feel responsible and trusted to take ownership. Staff need to be committed and skilled to support the launch and ongoing operation of youth forums – it needs to be high profile and be led by management. Progress may be slow and challenging at times but momentum must be maintained to show commitment to the approach and build young people’s capacity to take a lead role. Supporting young people to work together is also important, for example residential trips can help young people to get to know each other and work together.

**Plan for ongoing support:** Young people need intensive support and time to build responsibility. Project workers said:

“induct them slowly and surely...it is difficult for young people to get their head round the idea of a youth forum.”

One to one sustained support allows young people to fulfil their roles and build their confidence. Active involvement may not be suitable for everyone and the project lead noted that it can be challenging to strike a balance between the mass and depth of support needed. Combining support for youth involvement alongside wider packages of support, for example housing or education advice, can also be effective.

**Flexibility is key:** Flexibility has been key to SOLE's success and may be important to other projects looking to build young people's capacity. Things do not always turn out as planned but by listening to and working with young people, changes can be made to secure their ownership. When irregular attendance at SOLE meetings was noted, the group moved to a fortnightly meeting of core members and monthly meetings of all members. Meetings were run with minimal numbers to maintain momentum and agendas kept short. It was originally anticipated that SOLE membership would be for a limited period, for example two years, allowing as many people as possible to take responsibility. The time taken to embed arrangements has resulted in a core group remaining in post for an extended period although changes are now planned. The project lead's advice was to be flexible and to remain committed to involvement by finding ways you can bring young people on board.

**Respond to young people's needs:** The views of young people must be taken seriously by staff members. All activities need to be in demand if they are to be successful. Activities offered through the project are constantly under review and change to reflect the needs of young people. This is important to maintain overall numbers and ensure repeat visits. Sessions are split for pre and post-13 year olds to ensure that the content and approaches are age appropriate.

## Case study example England 2: Me Time Project

### Young People's Fund Award of £149, 841 (Grants to Organisations)

**Description:** YPF support has allowed the Coventry Carers' Centre to improve its offer to young carers who are not specifically catered for through core services. A variety of activities have been provided to allow young carers to enjoy time away from their caring responsibilities, make friends and access wider support if needed.

The project ran from March 2007 to March 2010 and has been selected as an example of supporting young carers.

**Introduction:** The Coventry Carers' Centre is partly council and NHS funded and caters for the carer community as a whole. Prior to YPF support, only one post, funded by Children in Need, was supported to specifically work with young carers – a Young Carer Support Worker. This post covers a range of support needs with limited time to organise or support activities.

### The Project:

Me Time started in 2007 and ran for three years to March 2010. YPF funding paid for an activities coordinator and an activities fund. The project aimed to provide time away from caring and let young people have time to themselves to join in activities. The activities coordinator noted:

“Because they had a care role they [young carers] felt they missed out on activities such as day trips and after school activities.”

Three types of activity were supported:

- Drop in sessions: Originally held on Saturdays before moving to alternative Wednesday evenings to meet young people's request for time off from their caring responsibilities in the week. Sessions offered informal activities (for example pool, use of computers, a space to talk) as well as organised activities (for example making cosmetics on the day of the case study visit);
- Individual activities: Supported young people to find and access activities of their choice. Support was available to find suitable groups and clubs (for example for dance, drama or sports) and cover costs if necessary (for example for transport and class fees);
- Day trips and residential: To a wide range of places including theme parks, London and PGL breaks. Where care support was required to allow a young person to attend, funding was provided.



Before Me Time launched, the Carer's Centre offered six activities a year to young people. In year 1 of the project 30 activities were delivered, 32 in year 2 and 30 in year 3.

All activities were chosen by young people and continually reviewed to attract young carers with suggestions captured on a wish board. Budgets were also explained to young people to enable them to understand what was deliverable and why some decisions had to be made.

The drop in nature of sessions meant young people could attend as and when they chose.



The drop in Centre is centrally located in Coventry, accessible to most young people by one bus ride. Staff were on hand to answer any questions or address issues at the time or signpost young people to other support services, for example for counselling or where additional care support might be needed.

While the drop in sessions, day trips and residentials were for young carers only, individual activities were offered by existing providers of services to all young people; these ensured young carers also made other friends so were not identified by their caring role and integrated within their local community.

**Partnerships:** A number of partnerships were built through the Me Time project. Links with Coventry Crossroads enabled support for the cared for to be arranged where required to allow young people to join activities. The activities coordinator also worked with young carers' projects in Warwickshire and Solihull to share ideas and arrange joint activities, including days out, which gave young carers the opportunity to meet more people, make new friends and gain access to a wider range of activities by sharing resources. The Carers' Centre affiliation to the Princes Royal Trust for Carers also offered a further network of professionals to share experiences.

**Beneficiaries:** The activities coordinator believes the main benefits for young people were:

- Reduced isolation: By meeting other young carers they realised that they are not alone.
- Peer support: Friendships were built with people who understood the issues they face and could discuss ideas.
- Improved confidence: Seen in the every day approach to activities and particularly through residentials. Parents and guardians also commented on this.
- New skills: Through an opportunity to try something new.

- Overcoming barriers: Young carers were often concerned about leaving the person they care for and there were finance and access barriers to taking part in activities.

These outcomes are supported by discussions with young people (all names have been changed to ensure anonymity).

Katy is 18 and has attended the Centre for seven years. She is a carer for her mum and has found the support positive:

“You get to speak to people in the same situation as you and you don’t feel isolated... I used to get bullied at school because my mum has a severe form of arthritis.”

As well as attending group sessions, Katy received individual support to attend dance classes (the project paid for clothes, shoes and classes) for one year which her parents were later able to continue. Although Katy had danced when she was younger she would not have returned without the support of Me Time:

“It made a big difference. I made new friends, I got confident and it got me out of the house... I made so many friends for life... I loved it.”

Katy is now a volunteer, helping the Centre on day trips:

“They’ve done a lot for me so why shouldn’t I give back?”

Sarah attended Saturday sessions, Wednesday evening sessions and day trips through Me Time. She also received individual support to find a drama group and identify her college course.



“It [Me Time] gives you a break. You make friends in the same situation as you, they [staff] give you support if you need it, if you have issues at home... They always find a way of helping you out of difficulties and give you an opportunity to try new activities. It is a fun thing to do and it takes your mind off things at home.”

Her brother has behaviour problems and cannot cope with crowded places. The trip Sarah went on to London through Me Time would not have been possible with her family. She reports personal benefits of joining the project:

“I have a break and go home more chilled and relaxed. I can deal with things more easily and they [staff] help me find ways to calm myself down.”

She has shaped provision by completing feedback forms and has been involved in fund raising.

**Learning and success factors:**

**Always listen to young people's feedback:** Activities, their timing and venues should be identified by young people to support attendance and enjoyment. The environment needs to be appropriate to young people to be welcoming and activities should be tailored to different age groups – what is appropriate for 11 year olds may not be suitable for 18 year olds.

**Do not badge young carers:** When working with young carers, siblings should be in different groups wherever possible to ensure young people are free from responsibilities. They need to be seen first and foremost as a young person rather than a young carer.

**Build relationships with parents and guardians:** Although projects should be young people focused, engagement of parents and guardians can support success. Ensuring parents know where young people are going and the activities they are participating in supports attendance. It also helps to overcome any barriers to attendance, for example to identify convenient days, times and venues.

**Don't be afraid of change:** If one approach does not work move on to the next one. Staff should be flexible, in part to reflect young people's suggestions but also to respond where activities are correct but approaches may need to change.

**Think about staffing:** Personal qualities as well as skill sets should be considered when recruiting staff. Young people should be involved in the recruitment process. Staff need to be approachable and get on with the young people they will be working with to get the best results. They also need to be aware of the wider issues facing young carers.

**Student Placements:** Taking youth work/social work students on placement as part of the requirements of their course can be a worthwhile investment. The additional support they offer can help to increase and address any capacity issues.

## Case study example England 3: Talent Studio

### **Young People's Fund Award of £2.7 million**

**Description:** Media Trust delivers in partnership with Fairbridge and Catch22. It uses media as a tool for the development of young people and delivers high quality media skills to young people from disadvantaged areas and backgrounds. By developing their film making skills, the project allows young people to find their voice, producing positive stories, often based on their own life experiences. Outcomes are building self confidence, personal development and self esteem and the general development of the participants.

The project is delivered in London, Birmingham, Nottingham and Manchester, and will support over 500 young people through 72 courses. The films can be viewed at <http://communitychannel.mediatrust.org/talent-studio> .

**Introduction:** Media Trust works with media organisations and charities to enhance their communications. Media Trust owns and runs the Community Channel, a national digital television platform and the only channel run by a charity. It focuses on ensuring marginalised voices are heard.

Catch22 helps young people to find a permanent route out of a range of circumstances which can act as barriers to progress and achieving positive outcomes in their lives. The project helps them develop the confidence and skills to find solutions that are right for them. Fairbridge inspires positive change in young people, supporting them to develop the confidence, motivation and skills needed to turn their lives around. Catch22 works across 150 cities in England and Wales and Fairbridge in the 15 most deprived areas in the UK.

**The Project:** Community Channel's Talent Studio gives young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the skills, support and resources to tell positive stories about issues that matter to them through their own short films. As a result of engagement in positive activities, the project aims to develop self-esteem, personal and social skills, and help young people find routes into education, training and employment.

Once young people gain experience of filmmaking through participation in a two to three week accredited training course, they are offered opportunities for further training, work experience and tasters in the media industry. To date 44 courses have been run, 315 young people have attended, and nine work placements have been completed within the media industry.

**Partnerships:** The key partnership is between Media Trust, Catch22 and Fairbridge. However there are also partnerships with the media industry who provide mentors and further opportunities to the young filmmakers including training and work placements.

**Beneficiaries:** Young people worked together to create films that contributed towards an Arts Award qualification. For many of the young people involved in

the project this qualification was the first they had achieved. Project workers felt this broadened their horizons, made them feel they could achieve in life and helped in the development of personal and social skills. As a result young people had increased motivation to set goals, such as getting further qualifications and improving their behaviour.

Four young people involved in the project shared their perceptions and experiences of the project. These young people got involved with Talent Studio as a result of word of mouth recommendations. They wanted the opportunity to learn about the media sector and valued the fact that the project was free of charge. This was found to be an important factoring encouraging engagement. Young people and project workers confirmed this. Young people felt that their participation in Talent Studio would help them in their future careers. One young person said:

'I want to use this as a career, I am a performer, I want to understand how to be humble and understand the whole (film making) process. This will be my career.'

Achievement of the Arts Award certificate was important to the young people. Two of the participants noted that prior to their participation they were not doing well at school. They realised that an accreditation could help get them into media courses at college. These young people now demonstrate aspirations and a desire to move on with their lives and to become professionals in the media industry.

#### **Learning and success factors:**

**Free Provision:** Free provision was an important factor encouraging participation in Talent Studio. Young participants were from disadvantaged communities and families could not have funded these activities. By providing free activities, Talent Studio removes barriers to participation and promotes social mobility for young people from disadvantaged communities by providing opportunities and raising aspirations.

**Designed by young people:** The project is guided by a quarterly project steering group that includes young people from all of the delivery regions, and key project delivery staff. Young people have shaped key decisions including around the project branding, marketing materials, distribution of films, screening events and future strategy and sustainability of the project.

**Investment in quality:** The level of YPF funding enables the project to invest in high quality, professional equipment and give young people an opportunity to learn in a very realistic environment that reflected the media workplace.

**Good Practice:** The Talent Studio model is being successfully delivered in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham. It works by matching industry expertise to organisations working with disadvantaged young people. The Talent Studio model can be easily and quickly replicated from city to city, and is now working in some of the most deprived communities in the UK. The key feature of the model is in linking young people in deprived communities

into high quality training, supported by industry, as a route back into school or onwards into college, or employment.

## Case study example England 4: The Centrepoint Youth Parliament

### Young People's Fund Award of £480,000

**Description:** Young people often feel disengaged from politics. This gap can be even more acute for young people who are homeless or living in hostel accommodation. Centrepoint brings together homeless young people in a youth parliament. Young people take collective action to make their views heard, to lobby and raise awareness among policy makers and bring about changes to support young people in this situation. The parliament has already had an impact on policy and has been held right at the heart of the UK's own parliament in the House of Commons chamber.

This case study demonstrates the role of the project in encouraging active citizenship and working with a hard to reach group.

**Introduction:** Centrepoint represents the needs of young people who find themselves homeless. As many as one in one hundred young people in the UK find themselves homeless at some time. The most common cause is family breakdown, but drug and alcohol misuse is also a common cause as are mental health issues. Homeless young people are susceptible to a number of risks. These include debt, involvement with gangs or negative peer groups, crime, disengagement from education, physical and mental health issues. It is estimated that the social cost to the public purse of addressing homelessness and associated issues is around £26,000 per homeless person<sup>2</sup>.

Centrepoint supports around 1,300 young people a year to find a shelter and permanent accommodation. The organisation also supports routes back into education, training and employment.

**The Project:** Centrepoint recognises that being homeless reduces opportunities for young people to understand and ask for their rights and for them to have their voices heard. To address this Centrepoint created the Youth Parliament to better represent the views of the young people they support. By making their voices heard, gaining respect from others and building self-esteem young people can start to rebuild their lives.

The Centrepoint Parliament has 15 elected members. They were voted in by over 800 young people who are supported by the organisation. Each member has a manifesto explaining how they will represent their peers. The CMPs meet every 2 weeks to discuss the views of the young people they represent. They tackle issues within Centrepoint to improve the lives of their peers, but also reach out to influence politicians and policy makers. The participants are actively encouraged to speak out and receive training to undertake activities such as visits to schools. Parliament members carry out lobbying activities to promote the needs of the homeless, especially homeless young people.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: New Economics Foundation, 2008, 'Work it out; barriers to employment for homeless people', Research report for Business Action on Homelessness

**Partnerships:** The Centrepont Parliament has achieved a high profile across the country. The Parliament has established relationships with elected members at Westminster which facilitated access for the Centrepont Parliament to sit in the House of Commons. Project administrators hope to repeat this event annually.

The Centrepont Parliament feels they have successfully contributed to positive changes in national policy to support vulnerable young people. They recently debated welfare reforms with MP's, policy makers, and invited guests and following this debate the government allocated £15 million to meet the financial needs of vulnerable young people, including homeless young people, who are in further education.

**Beneficiaries:** As part of this case study two young participants shared their experiences. A parliament session was also observed. Both participants; Jess and Rachel (all names have been altered to ensure anonymity) had been with Centrepont for some time. With support from the organisation both had stabilised their lives and become actively involved in parliament activities.

Jess worked on the Centrepont Parliament project as an assistant to the elected CMPs. Her role involved attending meetings, working on press releases, taking photographs and organising much of the PR and Media activities. She recently became heavily involved in the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) campaign and created a blog and Facebook page to raise awareness. Jess said:

“Winning the EMA campaign was a very big deal, it shows that we have some power”.

The experience of working on the campaign helped Jess make the decision to become a journalist. She is now doing voluntary activity with the Centrepont Participation Team and is starting college to study journalism.

Rachel has been supported by Centrepont for two years. She is now living in supported housing. During the time she has been supported by the organisation she has undertaken a significant amount of voluntary work. She volunteered with Victim Support to help young victims come to terms with their situation and share personal experiences. She also worked with Youth Offending Teams. As a result of her involvement Rachael has decided to pursue a career in young work. With support of Centrepont and her youth parliament activities she has completed an NVQ Level 2 qualification in Youth Work. Over the past eight months she has spent significant time visiting schools and speaking to young people about youth homelessness. Rachel has now secured a job with a large charity. She is determined to take her NVQ Level 3 or 4 once she is in post. Rachel does not feel that any of this would have been possible if she had not got involved with the project. Her involvement has given her the opportunities, skills and confidence to move forward with her life. The project has also provided practical assistance to support her development. In order to complete her studies Rachel had to give up her retail job. Centrepont provided a training bursary to supplement her income and make this possible.

**Learning and success factors:**

**Small project, big outcomes:** The Centrepoint Parliament is relatively small in terms of the numbers of young people and staff involvement. The project has however achieved considerable outcomes. The Parliament feel they made a significant contribution in bringing about policy changes that allow more generous EMA benefits for disadvantaged and homeless young people. As Rachel's story shows, emotional, practical and financial support is significant for these young people in helping them achieve positive outcomes.

**Empowerment and esteem:** The youth parliament empowers young people. Participants are introduced to democratic process and given the power to change the way Centrepoint operates as an organisation. This develops self-esteem and social-esteem, making young people feel valued within the organisation and within society as a whole. This has been important in promoting active citizenship more widely.

**Potential for expanding the activity:** The model employed by the Centrepoint Parliament could be replicated to include other groups of young people. This could include young people who are disenfranchised as a result of poverty, homelessness, violence, family breakdown or drug and alcohol abuse and crime. If the UK Parliament will allow one sitting a year, the Centrepoint Parliament could grow in stature and power, creating a solid base from which to represent the needs of young people directly to Government. In this way activities are linked to real power and have the potential to bring about change. It is not simply a tokenistic activity. This gives the parliament kudos among participants and will facilitate active citizenship more widely as young people realise that their participation in civil society can make a difference.

## Scotland Case Studies

### Case study example Scotland 1: Friends of the Award Edinburgh (FOTA)

#### Young People's Fund Award of £164,969

**Description:** Friends of the Award in Edinburgh & The Lothians received a YPF grant to employ two full time workers to promote and develop the Duke of Edinburgh Award in a project known as Award Inclusive. The project was intended to increase the number of young people from disadvantaged groups who could access and benefit from the award. The project was delivered in partnership with local schools and this case study focuses on the role of the project in increasing engagement of young participants in formal education.

**Introduction:** Friends of the Award (FOTA) in Edinburgh was established in 1998. Its aim is to support and enhance the local delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award in Edinburgh and the Lothians. There are several similar organisations across the UK.

In Edinburgh, FOTA works with the local authority, which is responsible for delivery of DofE, to enhance and widen access to the award. FOTA are contributing to the local Single Outcome Agreement with regard to youth achievement and personal development and are working to introduce hard to reach and marginalised young people to the award. This includes work with the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and young people with mental health issues.

**The Project:** The Award Inclusive programme encourages the re-engagement of young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. Young people are given the opportunity to work towards the DofE award as part of their curriculum. The project works with young people in their fourth year of secondary school. Young people involved include those who are disruptive in class, those with poor attendance, those with low self esteem and those with low academic achievement.

To be a part of the programme young people must make a long term commitment to the award (three months, six months, one year) and agree that their continued participation is reliant upon their increased engagement with education, good attendance and behaviour. For many of the young people the award is the first personal and academic challenge to which they have committed. Young people are supported to complete the award in and out of school. In general, young people have a small amount of time within their timetable set aside for DofE. They follow a mainstream timetable for the rest of their time in school.

The retention rate for the programme is high. Around 80 per cent of young people who take part work toward their DofE award until they leave school. Between 50 and 60 per cent of young people complete the Bronze award

during this time. For those who are not able to complete the full award the majority receive sectional certificates for the elements they have completed. These sections are skills, volunteering, physical activity and the expedition.

The programme has been successful in encouraging engagement with education and the achievement of positive post school destinations. School staff provided anecdotal evidence to FOTA that the time spent on disciplinary matters for young people involved in Award Inclusive decreases by around two thirds once they are involved in the award.

In a survey of 200 young people who have been supported by FOTA (Award Inclusive and others), all participants achieved a positive destination (continuing in school post-16, entering further education, training or employment). While it is difficult to assess the contribution of the FOTA to this, evidence about the impact of DofE is overwhelmingly positive. For example, in a survey of employers the DofE was found to be the most highly regarded in-school activity (not including formal studies) that young people can take part in<sup>3</sup>.

**Partnerships:** Within the Award Inclusive programme, the key partnership is between FOTA and local schools. The development of strong and supportive partnerships has been an important success factor. The partnership approach ensures that the most appropriate young people are included in the programme and allows effective planning to integrate DofE into the school timetable.

**Beneficiaries:** Young people involved in Award Inclusive spoke confidently about the activities in which they have taken part. The evaluation team spoke to three boys and two girls who are involved in DofE at school through Award Inclusive. The group are a mix of fourth and fifth year pupils from a local school for young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Young people indicated that they were a little nervous about DofE at first, not least because of the physical challenge it presents. All of the group are enjoying being a part of the programme and they reported that DofE has helped change their attitudes to school and learning. One girl said that previously she did not enjoy school but now that she is doing DofE, which she really enjoys, as part of her timetable she is more motivated in school generally.

Young people see the long term value of their DofE and the skills they are learning. They believe DofE will enhance their employment prospects and their opportunities to get a good place at college. For this group of young people the most significant benefits of their DofE are around enjoyment, living healthy and active lives and making new friends.

Teachers from the school highlighted the ways in which DofE adds value to their work within the Curriculum for Excellence. It is especially relevant to

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<sup>3</sup> Putting it all in perspective: the value of the Duke of Edinburgh Award to employers. The United Learning Trust

outcomes around healthy living but also aligns well with Curriculum for Excellence outcomes across the board. For example, through the volunteering section of DofE young people demonstrate their abilities as responsible citizens and effective contributors. Key learning in the skills and expedition sections of DofE contribute to literacy, numeracy and PSD outcomes for young people.

The school is dedicated to the Curriculum for Excellence and the delivery of DofE as a part of this. Their partnership with FOTA enhances the DofE offer that the school can provide to their pupils - many of whom would be unlikely or unable to access DofE through mainstream routes due to the additional support needs they have.

**Learning and success factors:**

**Selection process:** FOTA has developed and refined their selection process and this is viewed as an important factor in the success of the project. The process has a number of stages. Initially young people are selected by school guidance staff, who know them and their abilities. Young people then opt in to the award. This ensures participants are ready and willing to commit. During the summer term and the school holiday period young people receive an introduction to the award and a taster of what it involves. This ensures they are fully informed and are dedicated to the award by the time delivery begins at the start of the academic year.

**Group dynamic:** The make up of the Award Inclusive group is an important point for consideration. The programme is most successful when a mixed group of young people are involved as young people can then learn from their peers. For example young people who lack confidence can develop their own self esteem as a result of working with confident young people, while those whose behaviour and attendance has been poor develop more positive behaviours as a result of interaction with young people who are keen to learn.

**Sustainability:** FOTA wants the DofE to be sustained in schools after they have withdrawn intensive support and for schools to continue to deliver alone (with input from FOTA where necessary). One of the key challenges for the project has been in sustaining engagement and motivation in schools when FOTA steps back as teachers have many competing priorities on their time. By aligning the programme with key local and national policy priorities, FOTA can demonstrate the impact of the award. This goes some way to sustaining engagement. For example FOTA can demonstrate the contribution of the award programme to the outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence. This is a motivating factor for schools to be involved. Alignment and contribution to the local Single Outcome Agreement and the aims and outcomes of national policies, including Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and More Choices, More Chances, ensures the continued support of the local authority.

## Case study example Scotland 2: The Chill Out Zone (COZ)

### Young People's Fund Award of £134,071

**Description:** This two year project extended the youth drop-in service, the 'Chill Out Zone' (COZ), within the Healthy Living Centre in Bathgate. The project provided support and promoted skills development for vulnerable young people. The main beneficiaries of YPF activity were socially excluded young people, including looked after and accommodated young people, teenage parents and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) young people. For the purpose of this case study we focus on work with looked after and accommodated young people.

**Introduction:** The Chill Out Zone (COZ) was established in 2003 following a consultation by West Lothian Council to find out what services young people wanted. Young people wanted a health service that was tailored specifically to them. They felt that existing services were designed for adults and they did not always feel comfortable discussing their concerns in these environments. Young people wanted an informal service where they could access information on their terms. The project was established as a partnership between Social Work, Community Education and Learning and the NHS. Children 1<sup>st</sup> were invited to join the partnership and lead delivery.

**The Project:** COZ has the feel of a youth centre. Young people attend on a drop in basis. There is no expectation on them to discuss their health and well-being but professional medical and counselling services are available if and when they wish to access them. The drop in service operates weekday evenings, and a Friday afternoon. The COZ team includes youth workers, a doctor (to prescribe medicines and carry out examinations), two nurses and a youth counsellor. Staff support young people with issues including, employability, emotional and mental health, drugs, alcohol and smoking, sexual health, family planning and healthy relationships. The healthy living café provides free, hot and nutritious meals to young people on a daily basis and the café coordinator works with young people to develop their cooking and life skills.

The Young People's Fund allowed COZ to extend their work and provide targeted services for young people with specific needs; including LGBT young people, young parents and young parents to be and looked after and accommodated young people (the focus of this case study).

The transition to independent living after leaving care is identified as a chaotic period for looked after young people and one they often do not feel equipped to deal with. Through COZ (with support from the YPF) young people took part in a programme of organised activities to develop skills for independent living including, cooking, money management, employability and job search. Young people also took part in the 'Have Your Say' forum facilitated by Children 1<sup>st</sup> and the West Lothian Council Children's Rights Worker. The

forum discussed specific issues and services affecting looked after young people to bring about positive changes in local service provision.

**Partnerships:** A partnership approach is crucial to COZ. Partnerships enhance the service provided by bringing additional skills and specialist expertise. Delivery partners include Money Matters, the Drug and Alcohol service, the careers service and local volunteer centre. Partners deliver sessions and support to young people in and out with COZ. The COZ team are regularly invited into local schools and homeless units to raise awareness of the service and deliver sessions and support to young people.

**Beneficiaries:** Involvement with COZ brings a number of benefits for young people. Project workers feel that young people respond well to the informal feel of the centre. This helps them to open up, relate to staff and share their concerns. While relaxed and informal, COZ is also a professional service and young people receive high quality advice and support to improve their physical and mental health and well-being and reduce risk taking behaviour. For young people who engage regularly, they also benefit from a sense of ownership and belonging and the support of adults and peers to help them in the transition to young adulthood.

For the beneficiaries of targeted activities delivered with YPF funding, the benefits may be even greater. One young person who has been attending COZ for six years shared his experience. Robert<sup>4</sup> started attending when he was 16 years old. He had just left school and was living in hostel accommodation after leaving care. His relationship with his mother was poor and his sibling was also in care. He did not feel he had the practical support he needed to move on with his life, to find accommodation or employment. Robert was told about COZ by friends and went along to see if they could help him.

From the start Robert felt comfortable at COZ and happy to talk to project workers. He had not had anyone that he could confide in before. When things were worrying him he would keep it to himself as he did not know who to go to and did not want to be a burden on others. For Robert, one of the most significant benefits of COZ has been the emotional support provided by staff. Although it took time for him to fully open up to project workers he now feels very comfortable and confident in asking staff for help and speaking to them about personal issues and concerns. Robert said:

“I thought it was normal to hide your feelings and keep things to yourself....this has made a huge difference and made life much easier. It [having someone to talk to] is a huge relief”.

If it had not been for COZ Robert feels his life would be very different now. COZ assisted him to find his own home by working with Through Care After Care. Robert has also developed the life skills he needed to live independently, for example cooking skills. When he was living in hostels he

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<sup>4</sup> NB: Names have been changed to preserve anonymity

had a poor diet as he did not have the skills, knowledge or resources to eat healthily. Through COZ Robert has taken part in cooking sessions and has learnt to make simple, healthy meals within a budget. He is now a keen cook.

Money management was another area in which COZ assisted Robert. He recently got into financial difficulties with household bills. When he realised he needed help he did not hesitate to go to COZ. Staff helped him to work out how to manage his finances to get him through this period.

Robert now has a very positive outlook on life. He attributes much of this to COZ. Robert is living in his own home, is in a stable relationship and is actively seeking employment. He still attends COZ regularly to help with his search for work. Robert has also substantially improved his relationship with his mother. COZ brought them together and helped them to talk through and address their problems in a positive way. Had he not become involved with COZ Robert thinks he would be unlikely to have these positive things in his life. He said:

“I used to think nothing good would happen to me...I never imagined that my life would be like this”.

**Learning and success factors:**

**Skills and personal attributes of staff:** The skills and personal attributes of COZ staff are a key feature of the project. Staff respect and understand the young people, they involve them in the development of activities (asking them what they want to do) and respond to the issues they have in a personal way. Project workers commented that many of the young people they work with (especially marginalised, excluded and disadvantaged young people) can be very challenging to engage and it takes time and commitment to establish a trusting relationship. Project workers must be resilient and understanding of the issues young people are facing and must be motivated not to give up.

**Delivery of targeted activity:** COZ provides a generic health and well-being service to all young people in the local area. This service is highly valued. Funding from the YPF allowed delivery of targeted support for discrete groups of young people. This support addressed the specific issues faced by the group and allowed them to develop relationships with peers who were in a similar situation to them. This is considered particularly beneficial for looked after young people who, as a result of chaotic and transient upbringing, often lack the support of a positive peer group. Similarly, for LGBT young people and young parents the transition from adolescent to young adulthood is a time when additional support is needed. Targeted activities allowed young people to share experiences, learn and relax in the company of people whom they could relate to.

## Case study example Scotland 3: Granton Youth Centre Youth Peer Leaders in the Community

### Young People's Fund Award of £164,969

**Description:** Friends of the Award in Edinburgh & The Lothians received a YPF grant to employ two full time workers to promote and develop the Duke of Edinburgh Award in a project known as Award Inclusive. The project was intended to increase the number of young people from disadvantaged groups who could access and benefit from the award. The project was delivered in partnership with local schools and this case study focuses on the role of the project in increasing engagement of young participants in formal education.

**Introduction:** Friends of the Award (FOTA) in Edinburgh was established in 1998. Its aim is to support and enhance the local delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award in Edinburgh and the Lothians. There are many similar organisations across the UK.

In Edinburgh, FOTA works with the local authority, which is responsible for delivery of DofE, to enhance and widen access to the award. FOTA are contributing to the local Single Outcome Agreement with regard to youth achievement and personal development and are working to introduce hard to reach and marginalised young people to the award. This includes work with the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and young people with mental health issues.

**The Project:** The Award Inclusive programme encourages the re-engagement of young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. Young people are given the opportunity to work towards the DofE award as part of their curriculum. The project works with young people in their fourth year of secondary school. Young people involved include those who are disruptive in class, those with poor attendance, those with low self esteem and those with low academic achievement.

To be a part of the programme young people must make a long term commitment to the award (three months, six months, one year) and agree that their continued participation is reliant upon their increased engagement with education, good attendance and behaviour. For many of the young people the award is the first personal and academic challenge to which they have committed. Young people are supported to complete the award in and out of school. In general, young people have a small amount of time within their timetable set aside for DofE. They follow a mainstream timetable for the rest of their time in school.

The retention rate for the programme is high. Around 90 per cent of young people who take part work toward their DofE award until they leave school. Between 50 and 60 per cent of young people complete the Bronze award during this time. For those who are not able to complete the full award the

majority receive sectional certificates for the elements they have completed. These sections are skills, volunteering, physical activity and the expedition.

The programme has been successful in encouraging engagement with education and the achievement of positive post school destinations. School staff provided anecdotal evidence to FOTA that the time spent on disciplinary matters for young people involved in Award Inclusive decreases by around two thirds once they are involved in the award.

In a survey of 200 young people who have been supported by FOTA (Award Inclusive and others), all participants achieved a positive destination (continuing in school post-16, entering further education, training or employment). While it is difficult to assess the contribution of the FOTA to this, evidence about the impact of DofE is overwhelmingly positive. For example, in a survey of employers the DofE was found to be the most highly regarded in-school activity (not including formal studies) that young people can take part in<sup>5</sup>.

**Partnerships:** Within the Award Inclusive programme, the key partnership is between FOTA and local schools. The development of strong and supportive partnerships has been an important success factor. The partnership approach ensures that the most appropriate young people are included in the programme and allows effective planning to integrate DofE into the school timetable.

**Beneficiaries:** Young people involved in Award Inclusive spoke confidently about the activities in which they have taken part. The evaluation team spoke to three boys and two girls who are involved in DofE at school through Award Inclusive. The group are a mix of fourth and fifth year pupils from a local school for young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Young people indicated that they were a little nervous about DofE at first, not least because of the physical challenge it presents. All of the group are enjoying being a part of the programme and they reported that DofE has helped change their attitudes to school and learning. One girl said that previously she did not enjoy school but now that she is doing DofE, which she really enjoys, as part of her timetable she is more motivated in school generally.

Young people see the long term value of their DofE and the skills they are learning. They believe DofE will enhance their employment prospects and their opportunities to get a good place at college. For this group of young people the most significant benefits of their DofE are around enjoyment, living healthy and active lives and making new friends.

Teachers from the school highlighted the ways in which DofE adds value to their work within the Curriculum for Excellence. It is especially relevant to outcomes around healthy living but also aligns well with Curriculum for

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<sup>5</sup> Putting it all in perspective: the value of the Duke of Edinburgh Award to employers. The United Learning Trust

Excellence outcomes across the board. For example, through the volunteering section of DofE young people demonstrate their abilities as responsible citizens and effective contributors. Key learning in the skills and expedition sections of DofE contribute to literacy, numeracy and PSD outcomes for young people.

The school is dedicated to the Curriculum for Excellence and the delivery of DofE as a part of this. Their partnership with FOTA enhances the DofE offer that the school can provide to their pupils - many of whom would be unlikely or unable to access DofE through mainstream routes due to the additional support needs they have.

**Learning and success factors:**

**Selection process:** FOTA has developed and refined their selection process and this is viewed as an important factor in the success of the project. The process has a number of stages. Initially young people are selected by school guidance staff, who know them and their abilities. Young people then opt in to the award. This ensures participants are ready and willing to commit. During the summer term and the school holiday period young people receive an introduction to the award and a taster of what it involves. This ensures they are fully informed and are dedicated to the award by the time delivery begins at the start of the academic year.

**Group dynamic:** The make up of the Award Inclusive group is an important point for consideration. The programme is most successful when a mixed group of young people are involved as young people can then learn from their peers. For example young people who lack confidence can develop their own self esteem as a result of working with confident young people, while those whose behaviour and attendance has been poor develop more positive behaviours as a result of interaction with young people who are keen to learn.

**Sustainability:** FOTA wants the DofE to be sustained in schools after they have withdrawn intensive support and for schools to continue to deliver alone (with input from FOTA where necessary). One of the key challenges for the project has been in sustaining engagement and motivation in schools when FOTA steps back as teachers have many competing priorities on their time. By aligning the programme with key local and national policy priorities, FOTA can demonstrate the impact of the award. This goes some way to sustaining engagement. For example FOTA can demonstrate the contribution of the award programme to the outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence. This is a motivating factor for schools to be involved. Alignment and contribution to the local Single Outcome Agreement and the aims and outcomes of national policies, including Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and More Choices, More Chances, ensures the continued support of the local authority.

## Case study example Scotland 4: Dumfries and Galloway Befriending Project

### Young People's Fund Award of £49,633

**Description:** This three year Dumfries and Galloway Local Area project supported vulnerable and disadvantaged young people by matching them with adult befrienders.

#### **Introduction:**

The Dumfries and Galloway Befriending Project was established in 1997 to work with young people aged 8 to 18 who could benefit from the support of a positive adult role model. The project recruits, trains and matches adult volunteers with vulnerable young people. Young people come from a variety of backgrounds. They include young people who are lacking in confidence and self-esteem, young people who need support through a period of transition or instability, young people experiencing social isolation and young people who are involved in the children's hearing system.

#### **The Project:**

The project initially operated in and around the town of Dumfries. The YPF grant funded additional project workers to establish a satellite service and extend provision across the whole of Dumfries and Galloway. The project is now operating with a significant waiting list; around 60 young people, as a result of its high profile and well regarded work.

Young people are referred by a range of agencies including social services, education and health services. Young people can also be referred by a friend or relative or self refer. When a referral is made the young person is placed on a waiting list until a suitable match, in terms of support needs, interests and geography, can be made. Befrienders work with young people on a one to one basis for a minimum of six months; although nine to eighteen months of support is common. Befrienders generally meet with the young person once a week to provide practical and emotional support and take part in activities that will benefit the young person; this may include educational, health, recreational and leisure activities.

The project tracks the progress of young people throughout their involvement using simple self-completion questionnaires with rating scales for young people to mark how they are feeling at a particular point. Evaluation work carried out by the project shows that outcomes for young people include increased confidence and self-esteem (87 per cent), increased involvement in social and leisure activities (83 per cent), improved relationships with peers and adults (68 per cent) and improved coping strategies (68 per cent).

#### **Partnerships:**

The Befriending project works in partnership with other agencies during the referral process and in the provision of support. Where appropriate befrienders and project staff work collaboratively with schools, social workers

and other agencies to develop goals for young people and monitor their progress through the project.

**Beneficiaries:**

Three young people shared their experience of the Befriending Project as part of the evaluation. The three girls are now aged 19, 18 and 17 and have now left the project.

The girls were all referred to the project by professionals who were supporting them and their families. Although facing a variety of different personal issues, the goals the girls worked towards were very similar. For all three these involved reducing social isolation by getting out of the house, meeting new people and taking part in positive activities. One of the girls' is a full time carer for her mother. When she first engaged with the project she felt very isolated and emotionally down. She tended to stay inside and did not feel she had anyone to talk to about concerns she had.

All the girls spoke positively about the support provided to them through the project. The girls consider the skills and personal attributes of the befrienders critical in making the project a success. For them, a befriender should be outgoing, have a sense of humour, a friendly and understanding personality. It is also important for befrienders to achieve a balance between supporting young people to do things they choose while also introducing them to new activities and experiences which may take them out of their comfort zone but may ultimately benefit them. For example, one of the girls went with her befriender to see a ballet. She did not expect to enjoy it and was very surprised that she did. Arts activities are not something she would have considered taking part in without the influence of her befriender.

As a result of their involvement in the programme all the girls feel more confident in themselves and positive about their futures. All the girls said they felt a little sad when their involvement in the project came to an end, however, they also feel confident and able to deal with the issues they face as independent young adults.

**Learning and success factors:**

**A comprehensive training and support programme:** The project has continually developed and refined the process for recruiting and training befrienders. There is a three stage process in place. An initial meeting allows project workers to explain the purpose of the project and how it operates to potential befrienders. This is followed with an in-depth interview and completion of Disclosure checks. Befrienders then undertake a six week group training programme. Training develops the skills of volunteers to support young people and addresses all necessary child protection issues. The child protection element of the training is delivered at Tier 1.

Training and ongoing support for befrienders is vital for the project. Befrienders work closely with young people and it would be easy for them to become too involved in personal and family situations. It could be damaging

for the young person to develop a reliance on the befriender. The training sets clear boundaries for befrienders, ensures they are aware of their purpose and equipped to manage the relationship. Project staff, as neutral third party, also play an important role in managing the start and end of the befriending relationship.

**Working with young carers:** The project supports a small number of young carers. Due to their responsibilities these young people can find themselves very isolated and lacking an adult with whom they can discuss their problems and feelings. Although the project has not experienced any specific challenges in working with young carers, workers did identify potential issues that may need to be managed for this group.

- **Managing emotions of parents:** It may be emotionally difficult for parents whose children are their full time carers to let go and give their blessing for children form a bond with another adult. In these situations young people may feel a sense of guilt and be reluctant to engage with the befriender. If this situation were to arise, the project would seek support from other agencies to alleviate the worries of the parent and encourage dialogue between the family and the befriender to help manage the emotions of both parents and children. This is the approach they also take for other young people whose parents are concerned by their involvement.
- **Flexibility:** As a result of caring responsibilities young carers may be less flexible in how and when they can see their befriender. This should be considered during the matching process to ensure befrienders can meet the needs of young people.

Befriending West has not experienced these issues to any great extent and have generally found parents, of young carers and other young people, supportive of their child's involvement once they are fully aware of the project, its aims and objectives.

## Northern Ireland Case Studies

### Case study example Northern Ireland 1: The Armagh Travellers Support Group

#### Young People's Fund Award of £138,897

**Description:** This five-year After Schools Club project in the Armagh area enabled Traveller children to attend facilities in local schools where activities and homework support enabled them to maximise the benefits of their primary school education.

**Introduction:** One of the objectives of The Armagh Travellers' Support Group (ATSG) is to support the additional educational needs of children and young people from the Traveller community. This priority aspect of (ATSG) work has been carefully and sensitively considered taking cognisance of the inability of most Traveller parents due to high levels of illiteracy to support their children's education.

As a direct consequence educational attainment of Traveller children is considerably lower than that of their settled counterparts. The ( name the source) 2001 Census revealed that Primary school education was highly valued by Traveller parents. Nevertheless, it also revealed that there was a significant number of children who were not transferring to Secondary school. A significant number of those who did transfer did not complete their secondary school education and nearly two thirds of them had left school by the age of fifteen.

It appears that Traveller culture has lacked visibility within the education system and in society more widely. As a result Traveller children in school and the wider community feel isolated. One of the consequences of this is that many of them tend to become disengaged with education from an early age. The Armagh Travellers Support Group recognises the fact that it is extremely important for all children – irrespective of ethnic identity, to feel proud, confident and valued within their own culture and positive about their culture in the school setting and wider afield.. These attributes should help foster each child's personal, social and educational development.

**The Project:** A total of 30 children (aged five to eleven years old) were registered with Armagh Travellers Support Group after school project. They attended five different after schools Clubs within the Armagh area. Each After School Club facility provided additional educational, recreational and social interaction for Traveller children. This innovative project helped Traveller children to increase their interaction with their settled peers and through the provision of homework support helped them perform on a par with their settled peers within the school setting.. The project provided a range of support and activities through afterschool clubs including:

- one to one help with homework
- an art project as part of Traveller focus week

- summer activities throughout July/August
- role play to allow children to explore their own and other cultures
- a local library scheme
- physical activities, nature walks, swimming, football, dancing etc
- provision of healthy snacks, regular cooking and healthy eating advice.
- Additional opportunities for liaison with Traveller parents and teachers.
- Assistance with the transitional phase from primary to secondary school.

**Partnerships:** A partnership approach was crucial in the project's success. The Armagh Traveller Support Group established a good collaborative working relationship with Traveller parents, local schools, Southern Education and Library Board, and Southern Health and Social Care Trust. Staff from ATSG regularly visited to offer support and advice and assist with the integration of all Traveller children attending.

**Beneficiaries:** One beneficiary, a nine years old boy, has been living in the Armagh area for a number of years. The Children and Families Traveller Support Worker explained that when he started school at the age of four he had difficulties relating to other children in his class. He was very domineering and egocentric meaning he found it very hard to work in a group or share with his peers.

The child found it very difficult to follow the rules of the classroom and at times was very disrespectful to his teacher. He often misplaced books and struggled to complete his homework. As both of his parents had literacy difficulties it was recommended that he attended the After school at his school for extra support.

Through the club the boy was given the opportunity to play with his peers, to talk about his culture and to hear others talk about their lives. He was given the chance to enhance his learning in a safe and comfortable teaching environment.

The After school strives to enhance learning and teaching for everyone

The Principal at the boys' primary school reported that he is now in primary five and has shown himself to be academically gifted; he has been assessed with an IQ of 111 and a reading age of 11+ years. He has developed a love of reading and this has contributed to his excellent writing ability. He shines in all subjects across the curriculum, in particular mathematics. He is highly motivated and shows great enthusiasm. He seems to love school which shows by his excellent attendance.

The Children and Families Traveller Support Worker explained that the boys' parents are extremely proud of their child and have the highest hopes for him for the future. The Afterschool Project has certainly played an enormous part in this child's achievements.

**Learning and success factors:**

**Engagement with Traveller parents and pupils:** Establishing a good, early relationship with Traveller parents and pupils is key to the success of the project. It is important to have good ongoing communication with regular visits and telephone calls to parents of the children involved.

**The commitment of the Principle teacher and other senior staff:** It is vitally important that participating schools are fully committed to the integration of Traveller children, that they respect Travellers and their culture and have strong equalities practices in place. The school curriculum and resources should reflect the reality of Traveller history, culture, and language and in order to sustain engagement in the after school club it is important for schools to offer a range of varied activities.

**Transition from primary to secondary:** Through after school activities the project has provided a number of targeted activities to ensure that Traveller children develop the appropriate skills to enable them to cope with transition into secondary school.

## Case study example Northern Ireland 2: Youth Arts / Ealaín na bPáistí

### Young People's Fund Award of £144,730

**Description:** This is a four year project managed by Féile an Phobail. The programme developed youth art activities throughout the year, and during our various festivals, (August Féile, An Draíocht, and Féile an Earraigh) to showcase the great achievements of young people and the community in West Belfast.

**Introduction:** The Féile an Phobail Youth Arts Development Programme aims to create youth arts opportunities for young people. It has now come to the end of its four year funding from the BIG which has enabled the project to develop and increase its art activities and opportunities to young people. These opportunities included drama, live performance, theatre, music dance as well as showcasing local artistic talent that exists within West Belfast. The project was focused on helping young people develop and learn new skills.

**The Project:** Support from the YPF funded a youth arts co-ordinator to extend the activities of the organisation and develop a specific youth arts programme. This has allowed Féile to increase its youth art activities and consolidate its position as a professional and efficient deliverer of youth arts. The project has been able to continue after the funding from BIG finished with support from the Paul Hamlyn foundation.

The project provides youth led events and arts programmes to at-risk and marginalised young people. The activities often address pertinent social and cultural issues. For example, the project has performed dramas on kidnappings, created murals on knife culture and facilitated discussion and debates on policing, anti-community behaviour and resources for young people locally. The project also enables young people to challenge local politicians and decision makers, and question them on aspects that impact their day-to-day lives. Examples of this include the new Youth Fringe Festival which allowed young people to experience events such as Youth Scribes (this year titled *An Audience with Fiachra Sheridan and Tim Brannigan*) and the West Belfast Youth Talks Back with Gerry Adams, Dawn Purvis, Joe Lindsay and Eamonn Mallie. This aspect of the project works well on two levels; firstly, it provides activities that challenge the young person's behaviour, and secondly, it provides the opportunity for the young people to challenge other people about issues affecting them and their peers.

The Féile an Phobail Youth Arts Development Programme works closely with primary and secondary schools across West Belfast, organising drama workshops, musicians and storytelling. The schools have noted that there has been a notable improvement in behaviour and attainment in school and a reduction in anti-social behaviour which they attribute to the project.

**Partnerships:** The project has built positive and effective partnerships with groups from across West Belfast and beyond. These partnerships are with youth and community groups, ethnic minority sector groups as well as schools and arts based groups. Féile also works in partnership with over a dozen groups in delivering the now legendary Carnival Parade and Party in the Park which officially launches their flagship August festival. This attracts thousands of people from across Ireland and beyond onto the streets of West Belfast.

**Beneficiaries:** Over the funding period the project has reached hundreds of local young people through its events and activities. In order to involve young people further a youth sub group was established. The youth sub group are actively involved in the management and delivery of project activities. The project has trained young people in event management and works closely with a number of young people who now organise and manage events and festivals locally. The project manager states that the impact is now very evident as we are now inundated with young people requesting to help run events allowing them to step back and focus resources in other areas.

A member of the youth sub committee shared his experiences. Michael became a member of the youth sub group and was involved in the organising and managing of a number of events including the new Youth Fringe Festival. As a result of his involvement Michael has developed a range of skills and achieved recognised qualifications. He said:

“It’s been a really good experience. It enables you to be involved in a range of activities that you would never have the chance to do. It has given me confidence, the skills and training. I have organised concerts and events and I have obtained a range of qualifications including health and safety, first aid and suicide assist.”

Michael also commented on the longer term benefits of his participation in the project. He is now a trainee youth leader and is attending college to study youth work. Michael feels that he would never have considered youth work as a career option and that the project gave him the skills, confidence and the opportunity to do so. To help gain experience of youth work, Michael helps volunteer at the project and assists with the outreach work. He is also a peer mentor and is particularly successful in engaging disengaged young people.

**Learning and success factors:**

**Empowerment and ownership:** One of the key success factors of the project is that it empowers young people to make informed decisions, take ownership and responsibility for the development, delivery and management of project activity. Project workers commented:

“If you give young people the ownership and control at the very early stages the success rate at the very end is going to be significant, it also encourages other young people to get involved because they feel they are playing a vital part and an important role and not lip service”.

By way of example project workers spoke about the recent dramatisation of the Northern Bank robbery. Young people chose to perform this piece. The

play focused on the effect of the events on one of the bank workers and their family as opposed to the political repercussion, thus challenging the young people and the wider community to think about their actions and the consequences they may have.

When running an event the young people are treated as equals and involvement is not tokenistic. Young people are treated professionally and their input valued and it gives an opportunity for young people to work in a professional environment. This has resulted in an increased number of young people wanting to get involved in the project and thus created a more sustained long term engagement.

## Case study example Northern Ireland 3: Youth at Risk Programme

### Young People's Fund Award of £148,735

**Description:** This is a four year project managed by Lurgan Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The main objective of the programme is to inspire young people to reach their full potential in spirit, mind & body, build good relations and increase social inclusion within the community.

**Introduction:** Lurgan YMCA is a youth organisation working with marginalised and disadvantaged young people in the County Armagh town. The organisation works cross-community to address historical divides and divert young people away from sectarian activities.

**Project:** The organisation was established in 1986 to work with local young people aged 10 and above. The project actively targets young people deemed to be 'at risk'. This includes young people at risk of substance abuse, those with poor social networks and a lack of family/ peer support, those at risk from involvement in sectarian activity, criminal or anti-social behaviour and young people with mental health issues.

The small staff team, supported by around a dozen young volunteers, work on an outreach basis to engage young people in YMCA activities. Such activities include an evening and after-school drop in as well as cooking and dance projects. Support from YPF has allowed the project to further develop a youth led approach to youth development and participation with some notable results. Results can be seen through ten young people running the senior youth committee, six attending college and studying OCN level 2 Youth Work and level 3 Living with Diversity and four young people planning to study Youth Work at university.

The young people are represented on a youth committee and are actively involved in decision making with regards to programme development and delivery. The chairperson and secretary of the youth committee also sit on the Board of Directors and have voting rights within the organisation.

**Beneficiaries:** Two young people spoke with the team to share their views about what involvement in the project has meant to them. The girls, aged 16 and 17 years old, have been attending the YMCA for three years. Both girls felt there was a lack of activities for young people in the local area. Prior to their involvement with the YMCA they tended just to meet up with friends and hang around the streets. One of the girls commented:

"We used to spend our Friday nights on the streets and I first started when they had the Friday night alternative music bands and then rather than spend time on the streets I went to the YMCA instead."

Both of the young people commented on the enjoyment they have got from their involvement in the project:

“The trips and everything are great; I did the dancing programme and learnt how to dance the tango, salsa, jive and loads of other dances. It is a really chilled out and relaxed atmosphere and my favourite is the residential.”

“I really enjoy coming to the YMCA as it is a break between school and home. I get to socialise with my friends. I love all the activities the YMCA offers like canoeing, the expeditions, mountain boarding, residential trips, other trips, late nights and paint balling.”

The young people recognise a number of benefits as result of their involvement. Benefits include personal and social development and the development of new skills. One of the girls feels that her involvement has broadened her horizons and made her more accepting of those from different backgrounds. The other, took part in a study time programme in preparation for her GCSE's, where the project provided additional support and gave her the motivation to study. Without the support and encouragement of the project she does not feel she would have passed the exams. She has now gone on to college, has a part time job, an interest in politics and is a representative on the Northern Ireland Youth Forum.

**Active involvement** of young people is a key factor in the success of the project. Two members of the Youth Committee spoke about the ways they have been involved.

Hannah is 16 years old. She was voted on the Youth Committee as secretary by her peers this year. Active involvement means a lot to Hannah. She said:

“It made me feel special and empowered as I get to make decisions and the other young people felt I would be good in this role. The committee meets each Wednesday after drop-in. I take the minutes and circulate them to other members. We talk to young people to get their ideas and involve them in centre decisions. Running the late Friday Night Alternative is our responsibility and we decorate the building for special events, like Halloween or Christmas. As youth secretary, I sit on the YMCA Board of Management. It's not tokenism, I have a real input and I feel listened to by the adults. I think Lurgan YMCA rocks”

This sense of empowerment and ownership was backed up by the chairman of the Youth Committee. Jamie is 18 years old and has attended Lurgan YMCA for three years. Jamie commented:

“I am the chairman of the Youth Committee and this allows me to represent the young people at YMCA Management as a director. One of my, and the committee's, best achievements is helping organise the Winter Ball. It was the first ever all Ireland youth event and youth forums came from, Lisburn, Carrickfergus, Bangor, West Dublin, Cork and Greenhill. Over 100 young people came and the Youth Committee organised the whole event.”

Jamie also spoke about the benefits that he has got from his involvement. Before he came to the YMCA he was shy, lacked confidence and was at risk of engaging in criminal behaviour. Since his involvement in the project his self esteem and confidence has grown massively, he acquired the skills to become a youth volunteer worker and he has applied to do Youth Work and Community at University and is spending this summer helping at youth camp in Canton, Ohio. Jamie also feels that he is now less judgemental of those from other religions and more aware of the risks faced by young people, particularly drug and alcohol misuse.

**Learning and success factors:**

**Involvement of young people:** Through this project the YMCA has identified a number of key issues that will inform future practice. One of the main considerations is the time and planning necessary to involve young people in the decision making processes. Alongside this, project workers recognise the need to listen to young people without preconceptions, involving them from the outset and not merely as an add-on. Workers feel it is their responsibility to ensure that consultation is meaningful and is linked to clear outcomes that are valued by young people. The meaningful involvement of young people is aided through:

- **Resources:** The process of involving children and young people in decision making is not 'resource neutral'. It takes time, professional staff support, financial backing and good quality training to equip young people (and workers) with necessary skills to be involved in the process; however, the long term benefits of involving the young people can be significant.
- **Seeing the results:** Tangible outcomes are particularly important when working with young people, as they need to see results and receive feedback on the process to help encourage and motivate them.
- **Include the excluded:** The project focuses on the engagement of marginalised young people, including those with disabilities, minority groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

## Case study example Northern Ireland 4: NICHS Community Training Project

### Young People's Fund Award of £150,000

**Description:** A four year programme working with young people aged 14-16 years and their community leaders from marginalised communities in greater Belfast.

**Introduction:** NICHS is a youth organisation established in 1972 to encourage cross community relations between young people from segregated communities. This is done through promoting reconciliation and mutual understanding. NICHS aims to achieve real and meaningful change in the lives of the young people.

The organisation targets young people from marginalised communities whose lives have been directly affected by conflict. It aims to engage those who are most resistant to dialogue with members of other groups.

**Project:** The Community Training Project, funded by the YPF, is considered one of NICHS's most innovative projects. The project is intended to improve relations between and within communities and provide young people and community leaders with opportunities for accredited training.

It is a two stage programme. The initial stage is a single identity programme which addresses barriers that might hinder a cross-community partnership. The second stage focuses on the development of the partnership and is designed to build trust and encourage co-operation between the young people from different cultural backgrounds. Running in parallel is a residential programme which provides participants with a more sustained period of contact in order to aid the relationship building process. On completion the young person achieves an OCN level one or two qualification in Cultural Relations.

The project has found that for successful interaction you require recognition of those things which people share (for example, shared interests) as well as those things that differ. The shared factors act as a catalyst for building better relationships which then in turn allows the differences to be discussed. This results in more robust and sustained relationships, compared to those built solely on common factors.

Project workers feel that the project has helped address some criminal and anti-social activity in the communities they represent. They have received positive feedback from community leaders. The project has a high completion rate (around 95 per cent) for level one and two and many of the participants have progressed on to higher education and youth work.

**Beneficiaries:** As a result of cross community interaction, the Community Training Project brings about a number of benefits for young people and their communities. The project manager commented:

“The majority of the young people that participate in the project have never interacted with anyone not from their own areas, they had become very insular and their life did not exist beyond the place where they lived. They also have all the prejudice and suspicion that one would expect. This is based on what they have been told and not from what they have experienced. It is amazing that once the groups have interacted and made friends, violence or tension on the streets began to be nullified. It is the young people, as a result of participating in the project, who are breaking down the religious and political barriers within their communities.”

The programme also brings about personal benefits for the young people involved. The accredited training programme increases confidence and enhances employment opportunities. Project workers believe that participation in the programme equips young people to be more active citizens in their local communities as each young person acquires a range of skills. This includes the ability to work effectively in a variety of group settings, the ability to make judgments and decisions, to identify the values and ethics of themselves and of others in the community and to recognise, appreciate and support vital elements of the local community, to make effective decisions and problem solve.

A young man who took part in the first year of the programme spoke about his experience. He was 15 at the time (now 19) and achieved accredited cultural relations qualifications at levels one and two. He explained how in the past he had not mixed with other groups of people; even on a school trip those from different religious backgrounds took different buses. At NICHS a lot of time was spent together and he got to know other people well.

The project helped this young man create a CV and work out a career path. Although his level of participation with the project has decreased, when time allows he still attends to help out and offer his support:

“I learned loads and got some qualifications - it looks good on my CV - I didn't stay on at school but this training gave me the confidence to train as an electrician and I now work with an electrician - I'm loving it. I am going to be put on a course in September. I know I'll do well at it because I want to do it and that's why I went on to the second level with NICHS; I wanted to do it so it was easier. Not like school where I didn't do well because I didn't want to do it. NICHS taught me that.”

A young woman from North Belfast, who is currently going onto level two training with this year's group, also spoke about the benefits of participation. She is currently 15 years old. She said:

"I'm going to be doing my GCSE's next year; I'm going to work harder because I learnt you have to work to get things and I want to have a good job and a good life. I'm looking forward to doing the next part [of the course] and I'll meet other new people from other groups which will be good. Our leader in the community group is doing the course too which makes me seem as important as them and I will be able to help in the Centre with him and the younger children."

**Learning and success factors:**

**Accreditation:** The impact of community relations activity is considered to be greater as a result of the accreditation achieved by young people. The accredited programmes allow young people to see tangible benefits as a result of their participation. For many of the young people this qualification may be their most significant academic achievement and one which they considered beyond their capabilities. This may bring longer term benefits in terms of raising aspirations of young people.

**Making sustainability an integral part of the programme:** The project is promoting increased capacity in the local area and the benefits of the YPF are being cascaded. Training is provided to community leaders and they are then supported to develop an accredited training programme within their own organisations. This is helping to ensure sustainability of outcomes and a long term legacy for the project.

## Wales Case Studies

### Case study example Wales 1: EMPHASIS

#### Young People's Fund Award of £736,459

**Description: EMPHASIS – Engaging, Motivating, Participating with homeless young people and supporting them in Self-Development. The project works across Caerphilly, Newport and Torfaen providing an intensive and assertive outreach programme to the most excluded and non-engaging 14-19 years olds, who are most at risk of homelessness. Each area has a Young Person's Advice Worker to promote long-term support to identified individuals.**

#### Introduction:

The EMPHASIS project has been delivered by Llamau Ltd, a homeless charity, delivering services to socially excluded homeless and potentially homeless young people and women in South Wales. The word Llamau means steps, progression or threshold in old Welsh, and the organisation aims to support the people who use their services in making positive steps. The project was developed to extend Llamau's services to young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Caerphilly, Newport and Torfaen.

The YPF grant was provided over 5 years to part fund an area manager, fully fund a team leader, including three Advice Workers an Education Officer, an Administration worker, travel costs, general running costs and IT equipment.

#### The Project:

Participants are referred to the project via a variety of support agencies. They can also self refer. The vast majority of the young people are classified as NEET or at risk of becoming classified NEET. Throughout the duration (December 2006 to date) of the project 632 young people have been referred, 227 of whom have been supported by EMPHASIS. Emphasis share a referral panel with a Banardos Lottery funded project in Newport and they accept many of the referrals.

Each young person is allocated a case worker who gives 3-12 months support, which includes the development of an individual support plan which covers education, attendance, advocacy, signposting to support, health, benefits, substance misuse and any other areas the young person may need. Support is normally between Monday and Friday, however, the Young Persons advice workers do make themselves available out of normal office hours as required.

Young people take part in a range of activities from going to McDonalds and the swimming pool to activities such as canoeing, photography, quad biking, graffiti workshops, for example.

Project workers believe their biggest success has been in re-engaging young people with their families and moving them into employment, education and training. The project manager estimates that of the 227 young people they have worked with:

- 70% of young people that were classified NEET or at risk of becoming classified NEET are now in some form of employment, education or training.
- 85% of young people they have worked with have remained home or returned home.

**Partnerships:** The project underwent an intensive period of research and partnership building at the start of the project which has now resulted in them working closely with the local Education Departments, Barnados, Social Services and the Youth Offending Teams. Multi agency meetings used to be conducted by professionals only but now the project staff also attend to give the young person a voice at these meetings. This has encouraged trust amongst the partners and the project manager believes that attendance at these meetings have resulted in other organisations (particularly statutory ones) seeing the project as a valuable and knowledgeable resource.

**Beneficiaries:** During the visit to EMPHASIS two beneficiaries were interviewed, each of whom were at the time receiving support from the project. The interviews took place at the project offices in Newport and were conducted face to face. The names and ages used have been changed to protect identities.

Sarah is 14 years old and lives at home with her mother and three younger siblings. Her mother has had some mental health issues and has also been involved in domestic abuse which resulted in Sarah being the main carer for her brothers and sisters and also meant that she had very little, if any, time out of the house. Sarah was also being bullied at school, *“I was too frightened to go, there was one person that really scared me and I just couldn’t go”*. Sarah was referred to the EMPHASIS project by the Education Welfare officer as she was not attending school on a regular basis. At first she was nervous about being supported by EMPHASIS as she thought it would be *“horrible”*.

The project supported Sarah by giving her access to counselling and also by supporting her to attend school. When I met her she had been receiving support for 10 weeks and in that time she had improved her attendance at school to the point where she is now attending the inclusion unit at school every day as well as receiving counselling to help her with her emotional concerns. The support Sarah has received has allowed her to build up her confidence to the point where she can attend school on her own every day; when asked how she felt about this Sarah replied; *I don’t care now, I go to school and I like it, it’s fun.”*

As a result of Sarah’s improved attendance at school and her confidence overall she has now applied to go to college in September to study hair and

beauty. When asked what she believed her future would have been like before receiving support from the EMPHASIS project, Sarah said *“my future would have been being in my room all day or just being with my mum looking after the kids. Now my future will be being a hairdresser and eventually running my own business, meeting xxx(the support worker) was the best thing to have happened to me, she is different to other support workers I have met, she is nice and she really helps you more”*.

Jane is 16 years old and lives at a Llamau project house, which means she is classified as homeless. She was receiving support from EMPHASIS for three months, but this support ended when she moved in the project house and is now supported by another Llamau worker, based at the project house, although she still calls in on the project every day to keep them in touch with how she is getting on. There is no requirement for Jane to do this, but she has a close relationship with the staff and probably needs reassurance that support is still there for her and some social capital too.

Jane was referred to EMPHASIS by social services as she was having difficulties at home and was not in education, employment or training and classified as NEET. The project supported her and the family through mediation to help improve relationships and in giving her access to live at the project house.

EMPHASIS has also provided Jane with support in terms of training and further education possibilities available to her. In addition the project has provided her with opportunities to do various activities such as quad biking and horse riding and have supported her with life skills such as making careers appointments, money management and general day to day issues such as paying bills and shopping. The activities that Jane has been involved in are not just chosen because they are fun but because they help young people with team building, to make new friends and help improve their self confidence.

Jane is currently on an administration and reception course being provided by the charity Rathbone, and is waiting for a work placement. Once she has completed her placement she will then commence an NVQ in administration and reception work. Jane said *“ I now have something to work towards. I can see now that I do have a future. Without this I would have been a 50 year old living with my mother in the attic! It has been hard to change but I know living on my own I have to pay bills and be sensible and I enjoy doing it”*.

Jane had received support from other organisations prior to EMPHASIS and when asked why this time it was different she replied; *“The other people like the adoption team and others, they don’t do anything they say they are going to do. EMPHASIS actually does what it says it is going to do. My life is so different now, I have nice people around me and I always have someone to talk to and who listens to me”*.

## **Learning and success factors:**

**Assertive outreach:** identified by the project staff as a key reason for the project's success. One of the biggest challenges they face when working with young people is finding somewhere to talk where the young person is comfortable. The project does not expect a young person to come in to them, they actively source alternative venues where they can meet with the young person in surroundings that they are comfortable with; school, home, friend's house, pet shop, MacDonald's and so on. Meeting in a venue that is comfortable to the young person helps project staff to build a relationship with the young person seeking support. This is an important step to building the trust required between the young person and the project staff so that the young person has confidence in the project's ability to support them.

**Hand holding:** Part of the EMPHASIS ethos is to put the young person and their needs first. They ensure the young person is fully aware of what support is available to them and help them to access any support needed. They also continue to work with young people at a pace they are comfortable with reminding the young person all the time that it is about them and what they want to achieve. The project manager believes this to be a strong element of good practice that could be emulated in other services. They believe if a young person is not attending school or missing a YOT appointment then there is a reason for it such as bullying or no uniform. The young person needs to be encouraged, incentivised and supported to attend.

This "hand-holding" gives the young person the confidence to have a voice about what happens to them. This develops self-esteem and confidence, giving the young people a sense of value again whilst underpinning the fact that they are not alone and have someone who is there for them; on their side.

**Individual Support Plans:** Each time a young person is referred to the project they sit down with a project worker and devise a support plan. This support plan is based over a 12 week period and is reviewed every 12 weeks until the young person requires no further support. Each young person signs and agrees to the support plan and because it is reviewed regularly it allows both the worker and the young person to measure their progress. This tool empowers the young person enabling them to control their progress in the project and also in their future.

## Case Study example Wales 2: SIGNPOST (Powys Drug and Alcohol Centre)

### Young People's Fund Award of £526,950

**Description:** A confidential support service for those that maybe concerned about the drug and alcohol use of a young person.

**Introduction:** Powys Drug and Alcohol Centre (PDAC) was established in 1986 and staffed by volunteers. Currently the SIGNPOST project, funded by BIG Cymru is available in Newtown, Llandrindnod Wells and Brecon.

PDAC educates people about the risks associated with drug misuse with the aim of minimising the harm to individuals and communities affected by substance misuse. PDAC provides a free and confidential service to people who are concerned about their or someone else's substance use.

The SIGNPOST project, with its aim to minimise harm, links very closely with the Welsh Assembly Government's 10 year plan 'Working Together to Reduce Harm' to tackle the problems caused by drugs and alcohol in Wales.

The Government's plan has four key areas for action; "preventing harm", supporting substance misusers", supporting families" and "tackling availability". SIGNPOST concentrates on the first action "preventing harm" through their work with helping children and young people "resist or reduce substance misuse by providing information about the damage that substance misuse can cause to their health, their families and the wider community."<sup>6</sup>

**The Project:** SIGNPOST works to minimise harm to young people using and experimenting with drugs and alcohol. The project does not condone the use of drugs or alcohol, but is realistic about the fact that young people do experiment, and therefore provides advice and support to minimise the associated risks.

The project operates in rural areas. It is open to all young people but actively targets those at risk of becoming NEET. This is achieved by using their Drugs Information Bus to target places such as car parks and playing areas; anywhere where young people gather informally. This outreach approach was deemed very important by the project manager due to the issues in the area compounded by the rural nature of Powys, for example rural isolation, poor public transport and difficulties with access to services or lack of services in some areas.

**Partnerships:** The project works in partnership with a number of agencies: YOS – Youth Offending Service; Powys Youth Service; Police community

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<sup>6</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/substancemisuse/?lang=en>

support officers; local colleges and schools; Social Services; GP's; and Careers Wales. All of the above can refer young people to the project.

SIGNPOST also sits on the Local Resource Solution Panel (LRSP) where it works to help achieve better outcomes for children and young people. The panel provide professionals working with families, especially those in the universal health, education and community services; with better access to expertise and targeted family support resources.

**Beneficiaries:** The project is open to all young people aged 11 to 19 in the area, but focuses on those who are at risk of becoming NEET and/or already engaging in substance misuse. Research has shown that those young people who are at risk of or NEET have a higher tendency to substance abuse than other young people. They are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke and take illegal drugs, all of which can have an impact on their lives". Godfrey C. et al (2002: 14)

**Learning and success factors:**

**Referral Networks:** Although it has taken a long time to build strong networking partnerships, the project manager believes that it has been worth the time spent. The reason he believes they have been successful is because "... they see us as a positive! Simple things like we do what we say we are going to do. We don't let people down, over time we have built a good reputation and people trust us to refer young people to us".

**Targeted Outreach:** The project actively targets young people by going out into the community to promote their service. This is an important factor in their success as Powys is such a rural area. By employing a targeted outreach approach the project takes the service to young people, and removes potential barriers to participation.