



Proposal to explore joined-up youth engagement

Dan Corcoran has been in Faversham since September 2019 as a Community Priest which means that his main focus is out there in the community, sharing conversation with community individuals and groups and service users, including children, young people and families. An integral part of the role reaches out to schools, youth and children's groups.

He comes from a career which combines literacy development in schools, welfare information in the community and youth work in inner city and outer estates in Manchester, Croydon and Nottingham over 30 years.

Commissioned survey Engagement with children and young people and dissemination of results £2,500

Dan says: ..."I'm often excited to see all the amazing tireless community development work carried out by councils, agencies, businesses and the voluntary sector – across all ages, due to my background with children, young people and families, I'm finding myself involved in discussing the youth development scene in Faversham and surrounding areas, particularly as we have two mobile youth centres which are proving very popular and since lockdown and Tier 4 restriction we're still active in terms of detached provision across Faversham on a Friday night. This is a partnership with Swale Youth and KCC and Kent Police working with all those who hang out there, but also being mindful of County Lines activity.

What I frequently notice, is that in the area wonderful children's and youth provision is often carried out in silos with little joined up approach. I'm currently exploring this concern. We found in Nottingham and other areas that a **network** of anyone working with children and young people and the young people themselves, means that there's added effectiveness in how **together** we can reach children and young people from all demographic areas therefore including tackling deprivation and equal opportunities and effectively knowing our impact"

Such a network can together gain up-to-date **understanding** of young people's current concerns, anxieties, aspirations and needs which will help facilitate and empower local young people to play a part in **shaping youth provision**. *The Children's Society's* quantitative/qualitative model for their annual *Wellbeing Report* is helpful in assessing local dynamics and assessing priorities in **partnership** with local schools and agencies. Together with others we envisage a partnership with Brogdale CIC (who offer a wide portfolio of quality children's and young people's provision) this will be critical in each of the three streams. This analysis will prove extremely useful for future growth, but as with all things needs investment.

Creating a children's/youth network for communication, collaboration & celebration: £2500

Creating an ongoing partnership between young people themselves, clubs, Uniformed Organisations, Youth Parliament, Schools, Agencies, Health, Housing, Police, Churches – all those working with children and young people – this will encourage **communication, collaboration and celebration** regarding children's and young people's development. Much quality provision for children and young people is often offered in silos with little or no connections. Through experience of establishing such a network, a joined-up approach enables greater engagement with existing quality services, **identification of gaps** in provision and more **targeted services** being offered, such a network would also offer:

- a. Ongoing opportunities for children and young people to have more of a **voice and engagement in the community**, locally and beyond.
- b. Ongoing opportunities to **recognise and celebrate** where children and young people "go extra miles" (**GEM**) in society. Dan created the GEM awards back in 2012 while up North, they proved to be a great aspirational, esteem builder. Children and young people are too often automatically maligned by society and an ongoing youth awards scheme, fuelled by this network approach, can produce a **culture of kindness** to which young people can **aspire**. This can lead to raised **self-esteem**, a more positive trajectory through life and even **crime reduction and prevention**.
- c. Training for future life skills, discussion regarding local issues and funding opportunities to create sustainability for ongoing development.

Mobile games equipment and hospitality for local neighbourhood youth engagement £5000

A mobile approach to children's and youth engagement - where the engagement comes to the young people's neighbourhood - creates natural **community** and opportunities for open conversation without the issues associated with crossing the threshold into centre-based services, particularly during uncertain times. In time, such grassroots neighbourhoods are **empowered** as they play host to *their* mobile provision increasing **wellbeing, hope and purpose** on the doorstep. From experience in Nottingham and Faversham, there is value-added in both the large 72 bus and the less expensive to run GEM trailer unit, visiting and building community in areas that can feel forgotten as a grassroots mobile team provides **safe, welcoming spaces**, hot chocolate and indoor/outdoor activities to children and young people including table games, sport, game consoles, key skills training and creative arts. All these areas need continuous funding.

This proposal, for a total £10000, offers an ongoing partnership exploration – engaging the young people in the process – to create a well-researched, sustainable, community - empowering mobile youth and children's provision in local neighbourhoods where it is needed the most.

**This fits clearly with Swale Priority 3:
Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone**