

Youth Provision in Swale

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide the Western Area Committee an update on youth provision in the area and to identify opportunities to enhance services for young people in their area.

Current Provision

Youth Services are the responsibility of Kent County Council (KCC), KCC provide the core services as part of the Sittingbourne hub and a virtual offer (available to all Swale young people) and the remainder of services within Swale are commissioned out. The current commissioned provider is Optivo as the accountable body and Brogdale CIC as the managing body providing the main delivery. Sheppey Matters, Creed Outdoor Learning, Optivo and Brogdale CIC through Vibe community their delivery wing all work together as a consortium with other companies adding value as and when needed such as Sateda, Ideas Test and Mind Maidstone.

Activity covering the Western Area Committee areas is shown in table 1 below:

Location	Activity	Provider
Bapchild	None	N/A
Bobbing	None	N/A
Borden	None	N/A
Bredgar	None	N/A
Hartlip	None	N/A
Iwade	1. Youth Club (currently not running due to COVID19 and the village hall being closed) 2. Lego Club (currently not running due to COVID)	Brogdale CIC
Lower Halstow	1. School transition and emotion health & wellbeing activities with the primary school	Brogdale CIC
Milstead	None	N/A
Newington	Youth Club (Wednesday)	Brogdale CIC
Rodmersham	None	N/A
Tunstall	None	N/A
Upchurch	None	N/A
Virtual	Duke of Edinburgh	KCC
	Project 12	KCC
	Chill n' Chat	KCC
	Disability Youth Club	Brogdale CIC
	Siblings Club	Brogdale CIC
	Be You	Porchlight

In addition to the core offer, further outreach work is directed based on an intelligence led approach through a multi-agency group the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting, which the Council are fully engaged with. Areas where youngsters are deemed at risk or an increase in anti-social behaviour would warrant the group deploying outreach to support youngsters in a proactive approach.

The youth service model although universal does not have sufficient resource to provide services in every location, in addition to the main provision the linkage with voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups is paramount and there are a significant number of groups offering sports clubs, uniformed group, music activities across the borough. If the area committee wanted to look at enhancing activity in their area then building capacity within the VCS and linkage with Parish councils and village halls would be the most pragmatic approach. For example, assisting with volunteer recruitment and training volunteers etc. Funding and the relevant officer resource would need to be identified to progress this approach. It would also need to be agreed as a priority as part of the councils prioritisation process currently being undertaken.

RECONNECT Programme

Kent County Council has committed £10m to its Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme, an initiative that aims to recognise the selfless contribution the younger generation has made to help keep the county's residents as safe as possible throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help them reconnect with aspects of their lives that have been affected by it.

Swale LCPG have £266,500.13 as part of the Reconnect LCGP Grant Funding for the life programme, the duration of the programme runs until August 2022. Following the first round of funding applications KCC have awarded this sum of £12,500 to Swale Borough Council (SBC) to provide immediate local provision and summer activity by extending contracts/grants through existing arrangements to local providers. These provisions will need to be delivered between the 26 June to 5 September. Additional awards are yet to be announced however, the next is expected rounds of funding will be in October 2021 and March 2022.

Children and young people in Swale who receive free school meals are being offered the chance to take part in a range of activities to help them reconnect with their lives before the pandemic. Swale Borough Council have been working with local providers to subsidise a range of activities – from swimming sessions to cinema tickets – thanks to £12,500 of funding from Kent County Council's Reconnect programme.

The activities being supported by Swale Council between 26 July until 5 September are:

- Subsidised swimming tickets at Faversham, Swallows and Sheerness pools
- Subsidised activity mornings at The Light
- Subsidised heritage & education tickets
 - Raybel Charters CIC
 - Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway
 - Bluetown

- Medway & Swale Estuary Partnership

Future Provisions

New House is currently the Youth Hub in Swale, the centre is currently close and will not be reopening. KCC will be providing provisions from Milton Court Children's Centre, dates and provisions to be confirmed.

The Reconnect Programme will operate until August 2022 and will help all age groups, from newborn babies and parents who were left isolated through to the end of secondary school. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities will be supported until the age of 24 with employment related activities. The next round of funding is expected to take place at the end of September and we would look to work with Parish Councils to assist with delivery during the life of the programme.

KCC's Youth Service Contract is due for renewal at the end of November 2021.