



GROUNDWORK EAST

Leighton Buzzard Bi-weekly Covid-19 Response provision

Thursday Fusion Youth Club

Groundwork East requests additional funding to deliver a bi-weekly youth session for young people aged between 12-18 (up to 25 with additional needs). The session will be open to all, but will target the most vulnerable in the area. The sessions will offer a range of exciting and engaging activities, including physical activities, creative projects and specialist providers to deliver issue-based workshops. Alongside this the young people will have access to hot food and the chance to speak to youth workers. All activities will be free of charge and will support young people to manage the impact of Covid-19 on their well-being, social development and education. The proposal below outlines the background of the project, project delivery and costings for 6 months to 1 year of delivery.

Groundwork East

Groundwork is a federation of charities working nationally and locally to transform lives in the UK's most disadvantaged communities. We're passionate about creating a future where every neighbourhood is vibrant and green, every community is strong and able to shape its own destiny and no-one is held back by their background or circumstances. We help people gain confidence and skills, get into training and work, protect and improve green spaces, lead more active lives and overcome significant challenges such as poverty, isolation, low skills and poor health.

Project Background

In response to Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown, Groundwork East moved all youth delivery online, providing activities and support over the long three months at home. Although this was welcomed by many young people in Leighton Buzzard, it could not take the place of the face to face youth club. The youth club not only provided fun and engaging activities for the attendees, but for many was a safe space to be, someone to talk to and often a hot meal.

For some, remaining at home was a challenging ordeal as they faced domestic abuse, financial worries and parental substance misuse. Many found the experience to be isolating, confusing and scary. This had a huge impact on the mental health of young people, causing increased anxiety, feelings of depression and suicidal thoughts. As the lockdown ended and restrictions eased, the young people then had to manage sudden changes, not only in their personal and social lives, but the future of their education.



Groundwork responded quickly and returned to outdoor face to face engagement as soon as possible, providing detached sessions and 121 mentoring. Through Central Bedfordshire Council's Youth Provision Contract and with additional funding from Leighton Linslade Town Council and Cllr Victoria Harvey's Covid-19 ward grant scheme, Groundwork were able to host a series of summer events once a week at Astral Park, providing young people with a range of activities, including, dance, football and bike maintenance. With support from Police and local organisations, the events were a huge success, with some of the most vulnerable young people and families taking part and receiving much needed support.

Feedback from those involved demonstrated that the events helped reduce feelings of isolation, improved mental well-being and helped build positive relationships between families, the police and professionals. Prior to the events, concerns were rising over youth led ASB in the area, specifically incidents of arson. During the events the police confirmed a reduction in the incidents and complaints made by local residents.

Future Plans

As the nights draw in, Groundwork will have less opportunity to deliver provision outside and are looking to return to the youth centre. As part of the Central Bedfordshire youth provision contract, Groundwork will provide the following:

- A weekly open access youth club (Tuesday)
- A bi-weekly LGBTQ+ group (Wednesday)
- A bi-weekly mentoring evening (Thursday)

Due to the current restrictions, numbers will be limited to ensure the sessions are Covid-19 safe. Pre Covid-19, the youth club would see between 30 and 40 young people a session, but with restrictions it will be much less. Groundwork do not have the capacity through the youth provision contract to increase delivery in the Leighton Buzzard area, without taking much needed support away from other areas.

Groundwork request funding to provide an additional bi-weekly session on a Thursday to compliment the delivery outlined above. This evening will have a specific Covid-19 response focus and will be designed to tackle the main concerns young people are experiencing as a result of the recent lockdown and help them return to a 'new normal'. Groundwork will





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continue to work with the police and professionals to target the most vulnerable to engage with the sessions. Activities will include the following:

- Mindfulness and wellbeing support including managing anxiety and stress
- Engaging in education and understanding Information (News and social media)
- Physical and creative activities including football skills, art and crafts and drama
- Hot food
- Specialist services providing information and guidance in areas such as CSE, domestic abuse and gangs and knife crime.

Each session will last 45mins/1 hour and two sessions will be held a night with cleaning time in between. Sessions will support between 8-12 young people depending on the regulations of the building. All sessions will be delivered by trained youth workers, will be fully risk assessed and Covid-19 safe.

Outcomes

As a result of the sessions we expect to see the following outcomes:

- Increase in mental well-being
- Increase in confidence and communication
- Increased engagement at school
- Reduced ASB

Groundwork will assess these outcomes through evaluation forms, feedback from young people, professionals and schools and statistics from the police. At the end of each quarter Groundwork will provide a short narrative report on the project, alongside basic statistical data and 1 case study.



**Cost of the programme
6 months of delivery (12 sessions)**

Activity	Cost
Planning and Delivery	4043
Reporting and Meetings	620
Management	600
Marketing	150
Mileage	225
Resources	240
Total	£5,878

12 months of delivery (24 sessions)

Activity	Cost
Planning and Delivery	8086
Reporting and Meetings	1240
Management	1200
Marketing	300
Mileage	450
Resources	480
Total	£11,756

Plus, VAT at the prevailing rate.

For more information please contact:

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