

Fusion Youth – March to July 2021

After the success of the summer diversion activities, Groundwork was funded by Leighton Linlade Town Council to deliver an additional bi-weekly night at Leighton Buzzard Youth Club. The aim of the project was to continue to build on the great work of the summer, providing a safe space and engaging activities for the most vulnerable and at-risk young people in the area. Groundwork had hoped to open the session named 'Fusion Youth', in January, but due to the lockdown over Christmas and New Year, the provision started in March and runs until August.

Publicity

Fusion Youth was promoted through a range of different mediums including the following;

- Outreach: Youth workers visited various 'hotspot' areas where young people were known to congregate, to advertise the provision and encourage users.
- Online: Groundwork promoted the opportunity online using Facebook and sharing with local pages and groups.
- Posters: Posters were displayed in local businesses and at the youth club.
- Professionals and partners: Groundwork regularly attends a range of multi-agency meetings including BRIF (building resilience in families), Locality meetings and contextual safeguarding meetings, where information was shared about the provision on offer and support provided to help young people and families engage.

Delivery

Groundwork offered a wide range of different activities to engage the young people, utilising both indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure the young people were Covid-19 safe. Activities offered included football, basketball, badminton, arts and crafts and DJ sessions and were based on the interests of those attending. The activities not only provided positive alternatives to ASB or hanging out in spaces where they were seen to be causing a disturbance, but offered a safe space for young people to open up about topics closest to their hearts; including home, school life, friendships and the impact of the pandemic. The opportunity to speak openly about these topics, either in groups or 121, provided the young people with a chance to offload their fears and worries, to

discuss and debate important topics and get advice and guidance. As a result, the young people grew in confidence and developed communication skills, making it easier to voice their views in a respectful way and manage conflict. Youth workers also saw an improvement in mental well-being, with the young people feeling relaxed and happy during the sessions and young people reported to be making more positive choices outside of the club, putting into practice the tools and strategies they learnt during the sessions. Many of the young people who attend 'Fusion Youth' also attended the various other project evenings delivered by Groundwork on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council, ensuring they young people had consistent youth provision throughout the week and a wide range of activities including mindfulness, 121 support and art therapy. Due to the Covid-19 regulations, Groundwork was unable to deliver any cooking sessions or prepare hot food, so as an alternative offered snacks, fruit, bottled water and juice, to ensure those attending had access to food and drink.

A number of the young people that accessed 'Fusion Youth' were known to early help and social care and therefore it was important to build strong trusting relationships with these individuals, not only to help manage on-going ASB issues in the town centre and wider locality, but to encourage them to engage with the various agencies working in the area. As the young people built trust in the youth workers, they also started to trust other agencies working with Groundwork, as they could see the positive work going on between the partners and how all the professionals were working together to provide for young people. CBC's safer community officers and police attended the sessions regularly, helping to break down the barriers and negative attitudes towards the police. During these visits, professionals were able to put a face to a name of those discussed at the contextual safeguarding meetings, ensuring that in future those at risk were known to the police and could be supported when needed. As a result of this work, the young people started to engage more with external agencies and Groundwork saw a positive change in the young people's behaviour and attitude towards criminal behaviour.

Partnership work

Groundwork worked with a number of outside organisations to inform young people on a variety of issues, inviting them to deliver workshops during the sessions. So far, the group has had visits from Boxing Saves Lives, Link to change, CBC safer community officers, the Police Education Officer to discuss 'one punch, two lives' and thanks to the support of Rachel Carne PCSO, an off-duty officer delivered a workshop on bike maintenance. Youth workers from Tactic spoke to members of the group to promote their youth voice group, alongside Young Healthwatch, who were recruiting for volunteers. Three young people are now volunteering for the charity and in the summer will help run 'don't stop the beat' CPR, peer on peer first aid training. Groundwork is supporting this initiative alongside Tactic and Young Healthwatch to encourage a large number of young people to attend the session and learn valuable life skills in first aid.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD FUSION YOUTH GROUP

12 to 18 years (up to 25 years with an additional need or a disability).

Fusion Youth Group is a targeted youth session held two Thursday's a month.

Keep up to date with what's on via Facebook!

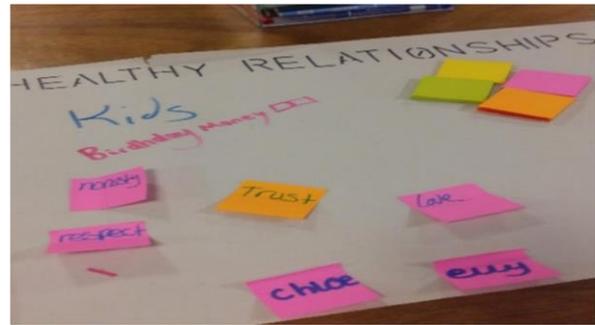
Leighton Buzzard Youth Club

The group will offer a range of activities including sports, drama and arts and crafts.

Thursday 5pm - 7pm, Van Dyke Road, Leighton Buzzard LU7 3FU

All sessions are invite only and follow Covid-19 health and safety procedures

For more information contact Stephen Swain on 07736132294 or email stephen.swain@groundwork.org.uk



Outputs

Two sessions monthly

Month	Females	Males
March 21	9	10
April 21	10	11
May 21	5	9
June 21	6	13