



GROUNDWORK EAST

Leighton Buzzard Bi-weekly Youth Club

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

Over the last two years and in response to Covid-19, Groundwork East adapted youth work delivery to navigate the various lockdowns and restrictions ensuring young people in Leighton Buzzard received support. This included online sessions, outdoor activities, youth club sessions and hot food. For some, this time 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. The area also saw an increase in youth led ASB and arson, with many vulnerable young people taking to the streets with minimal supervision or guidance.

Groundwork responded quickly with online support and returned to outdoor face to face engagement as soon as possible. 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 and a 6 month, bi-weekly youth club focusing on the key concerns young people experienced as a result of Covid-19. With support from Police and local organisations, the delivery was 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 all activities helped reduce feelings of isolation, improved mental well-being and helped build positive relationships between families, the police and professionals. During the sessions, the police also confirmed a reduction in incidents of arson, ASB and complaints made by local residents.



Leighton Buzzard Bi weekly youth club

Despite the fact that restrictions have been removed and youth work delivery slowly returns to normal, youth provision is needed more than ever to help support young people over the impact of the last two years. Positive, free activities for young people after school and in the holidays, helps tackle mental ill-health, promote positive well-being, ensure young people are physically active, are able to safely spend time with peers and are provided with hot meals. Activities also reduce the risk of involvement in county lines and CSE (child sexual exploitation), by providing a safe space for young people access support from specialist agencies.

As part of the Central Bedfordshire youth provision contract, Groundwork currently provides the following:

- A weekly open access youth club (Tuesday)
- A bi-weekly LGBTQ+ group (Wednesday)
- A bi-weekly happy and healthy hub evening (Thursday)

Groundwork request funding to provide an additional bi-weekly session on a Thursday to compliment the delivery outlined above, between May and October (12 sessions). Groundwork will continue to work with the police and professionals to target the most vulnerable to engage in 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 2 hours and support 20/30 young people (covid-19 restrictions dependent).

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, 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) between May and October

Activity	Cost
Staff Time	
Planning	£1584
Delivery	£3192
Reporting and Meetings (2 reports and attendance at 2 meetings)	£828
Management and marketing	£500
Capital Costs	
Mileage	£225
Resources (session equipment and food)	£180
Total	£6509

Plus, VAT at the prevailing rate.

For more information please contact:

Diana Hedley
Youth Manager
Diana.hedley@groundwork.org.uk
07736 132295

