



Mid Galloway Young Citizens Project

Executive Summary

In Mid Galloway a number of young people live in rurally and peripherally isolated small villages and as such face a lack of opportunities, barriers to transport and often due to no fault of their own, have been stigmatised within their local communities due to wider family issues. Young people who have been involved or are at risk of becoming involved with incidents of anti-social behaviour were identified by the key partners and a project was created to give them the opportunity to address these issues in a safe and non-threatening environment.

The project focused on partnership working with a specific group of young people, over an intense week long period. They were supported to work as a team and encouraged to build positive relationships with service providers and older members of their communities by delivering a community safety day.

By working closely with the Dumfries and Galloway Police, Fire and Rescue service and Community Learning and Development officers, the young people got the chance to get to know the faces behind the uniforms, to find out what they do and to build positive relationships with them and vice versa. Furthermore, by working together in partnership, the agencies involved were able to pool resources, skills and expertise to support the young people to address their issues, appreciate the positive things within their communities and identify methods to encourage them to become involved, accepted and active citizens in their villages.

The project won the Partnership Working Award at the Safer Communities Awards 2012.

Project Background and Aims

Statistical evidence from the police shows that school holidays are a time when young people who are not engaging with organised activities e.g. holiday clubs etc. may be at risk of becoming involved in incidents of anti-social behaviour. In Mid Galloway, many of the young people live in small, rural isolated communities and it was found that if they had wider family issues or have been in trouble, it can lead to them being stigmatised by older people and the wider community.

This project focused on partnership work with a specific group of young people, with identified needs, over an intense week long period. It supported them to work as a team and helped them to build positive relationships with service providers and older members of their communities. It also helped them to achieve positive recognition within their local communities, often for the first time.

The aim of the project was to focus on intergenerational work with young people at risk of offending in their local communities, to promote community safety and encourage active citizenship. The projects outcome targets were:

- To work in partnership to identify and engage with the specific target group of young people.
- To work with the young people to identify issues relevant to them and their local communities, to address issues of anti-social behaviour and to promote active citizenship.

- To work in partnership to develop projects which provide the opportunity for young people to work with service providers and older members of their community in a non-threatening and pro-active manner.

Activities

Referrals were invited via a multi-agency approach from all agencies that work with young people in Mid Galloway including; schools, police, youth workers, social work and carers and befrienders projects. Eight young people were identified as potential recipients for the project.

On the first day of the project the young people spent the day team building at the local fire station and worked to identify their personal issues and goals for the project around citizenship. On the second day the young people were supported to plan and prepare for a community safety day at the local community centre. This involved planning and publicising the event, preparing refreshments (soup, scones etc.) and inviting the older residents of the village to attend. On the third day the young people worked with service providers to host the day, responsibilities included:

- giving out leaflets and information on community safety.
- helping to organise fire safety checks.
- being in charge of an electric blanket and chip pan/deep fryer exchange.
- serving up lunch and refreshment.
- hosting an afternoon of entertainment, including bingo sessions.

The final day was an away day trip to an outdoor activity to further develop their team building skills and spend time identifying what they have learned and how they can be supported to continue their positive development after the project.



Team building at the fire station and at Xscape

Impact

The young people worked together to deliver an inter-generational community safety day which was attended by 75 members of the public. A wide range of skills were gained by the young people including event planning, preparation and cooking skills, and an increased awareness of aspects of community safety. Furthermore, both the young and older members of the community gained a greater understanding of each other's needs.

Through the event, the young people felt included and involved in their community and its members had an increased awareness of a range of community safety issues, including personal safety, home safety and health related information. Furthermore, the communities were helped to be made safer through the provision of home safety fire checks and replacement of fire hazardous equipment.

The young people were supported to identify the effect of their actions on themselves, older people and the local community. The project also allowed the older people in the community to have a better understanding and tolerance of young people and reduced their perceptions and fear of crime.

All eight young people who were identified by partner referrals completed the course and received a certificate of achievement from local elected members. To date none of the young people who attended have come to the attention of the police. Follow up from referrers showed that the young people have a much improved attitude to other service providers and have not been involved in any further incidents of anti-social behaviour. In addition, the young people are now attending additional activities with two of them securing part-time employment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The partners met regularly and used the LEAP model (learning, evaluation and planning) as a tool to ensure the project was properly researched, monitored and evaluated. Participatory appraisal techniques and video diaries were also used with the young people to ensure everyone had a chance to have their say. The monitoring data collected fed into the LEAP model and included original referrals, attendance sheets, record of session sheets, daily evaluation sheets, photographic evidence, video diaries, follow ups from referrers, young people and service providers and end of project reports.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

It was found that it was a stretch to fit everything into four days and as such it is suggested that next time the project is extended to five days to ensure there is time to cover everything.

This project was developed by the Mid Galloway Community Safety Forum and has been evidenced at Area Committee level as a model of good practice. Funding from the CashBack for Communities Youthlink Scotland: General Youth Work Fund has been sourced to run the course for a further year, and continue to build on the successes so far.

Resources

Funding: £1200 funding from Dumfries and Galloway Community Safety Partnership. The hire of premises and staffing costs were provided in kind by the partners.

Partners: Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue, Dumfries and Galloway Police, NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

Outcomes

National
9 – We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
11 – We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others

Local
Encourage and involve community groups and individuals in working together to promote safer and stronger communities.
Engage young people in activities promoting positive citizenship
Create communities where people feel protected and live without fear for their own or other people's safety.
Our communities and people feel included and confident.

Practice Note Information

Practice Note Title: Mid Galloway Young Citizens Project
Practice Note No: 43
SCSN Topic Areas: Safety of Vulnerable Groups, Environment Safety, Public Space Safety, Personal Safety
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