

6 December 2023

Subject:	National Youth Work Week and Statutory Guidance Update
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Purpose of Report	Information

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider and comment upon the National Youth Work Week and Statutory Guidance Update.

2 Links to the following Board Priorities

Priority 1	We will help keep people healthier for longer The statutory duty places a responsibility on LA's to secure access for young people to sufficient activities and facilities for their physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing.
Priority 2	We will help keep people safe and support Communities Providing a range of universal and targeted youth support and safe places to go for young people helps to address both their and community concerns around safety.
Priority 3	We will work together to join up services The Youth Service works with other services to ensure we have a joined up and coordinated youth offer for young people.
Priority 4	We will work closely with local people, partners and providers of services In refreshing the Youth Offer and responding to the reviewed statutory guidance we will work closely with young people, communities, partners and providers to ensure our offer is co-produced and meets local need.

4 Context and Key Issues

National Youth Work Week

- 4.1 National Youth Work Week is an annual event for all those working in the youth sector to celebrate and recognise the great work that youth workers and volunteers do with young people. During National Youth Work Week, which took place between 6th – 12th November, we promoted the theme of safe ‘places and spaces’ for young people in a range of youth work settings including universal youth provision providing somewhere to go, detached youth work in communities addressing local issues and concerns and targeted youth support to some of our most vulnerable young people. Youth workers are in a unique position to engage, develop, challenge and support young people to make informed decisions about their lives.
- 4.2 Through the week we promoted the youth offer and wanted to demonstrate the difference youth work makes to young people and how it can alleviate pressure on other services. We did this through showcasing the youth offer and job opportunities in Sandwell to partners, providers and local people through 2 open events and social media campaigns. We also held a staff event celebrating the achievements of our staff and hearing about the journeys of some of our young people sharing the impact youth work has had on them. Through the trusting relationships that young people have had with their workers and having access to enrichment activities, safe places to go, we saw first-hand how young people have been empowered to make informed choices about their lives and feeling more positive about their futures.
- 4.3 To mark National Youth Work Week, the National Youth Agency who has published its latest report on the Social Costs of Youth Work Cuts: Preventing Youth Offending Through Youth Work gave the keynote address at the staff event. The report finds youth work saves £500 million on public spending through crime reduction alone and social investment research reveals that £1 investment in youth work equates to a return value of more than £6.
- 4.4 Furthermore, research from the NYA has found the closure of youth centres and lack of access to services has led to an increased likelihood of young people being involved in crime.

- 4.5 In recognition of the ongoing cost of living crisis, during the week we launched warm hubs for young people, which have been co-produced with them. The warm hubs, for 11–19-year-olds and up to 25 for those with additional needs, are safe and welcoming spaces, accessible and open regularly and run by qualified and experienced youth workers and volunteers. Depending on facilities at each hub, young people will be able to get a hot drink, a snack, or a hot meal. The Youth Service provides a range of activities and services that support young people to lead healthier lives.

Statutory Guidance

- 4.2 Local Authorities (LA's) have a statutory duty to provide a local youth offer for young people and in-line with the strengthened guidance published on 28 September are required to ensure that their local youth offer is responsive to the needs of young people. The updated guidance provides greater clarity on what is required and specifies the need for high quality and effective practise provided by trained youth workers. The statutory duty places a responsibility on LA's to secure access for young people to sufficient activities and facilities for their physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing. The LA needs to take the lead on co-ordinating a needs assessment to establish the needs of young people in Sandwell, both in terms of sufficient activities and facilities and how gaps will be addressed. The guidance further puts a duty on local partners to work together to provide a holistic offer to young people that meets their needs.

5 Engagement

- 5.1 The statutory guidance states that Local Authorities must consult and take into account the views of young people in their area on;
- current provision
 - the need for additional activities and facilities
 - access to those activities and facilities
- 5.2 LA's will also need to engage with providers within voluntary, community and private sector to determine what the current provision is in Sandwell.

6 Implications

Resources:	No resource implications arising directly from this report.
Legal and Governance:	The Council has a legal duty to secure, so far as reasonably practicable leisure time activities and facilities for young people, aged 13-19 and those with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 20-24. The scope of the statutory duty requires LA's to provide access for all qualifying young people to a sufficient quantity of youth services.
Risk:	No risk implications arising directly from this report.
Equality:	Having a sufficient youth offer across the Borough will ensure there is an equity of opportunity for all young people to access good quality youth work and youth provision that meets their needs.
Health and Wellbeing:	Providing access to youth activities and youth facilities has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of young people.
Social Value:	Youth work provides opportunities for young people to volunteer and take social action within their communities.
Climate Change:	No climate change implications arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting:	Improve the outcomes for our children, young people and families.

6 Appendices

Appendix One - Sandwell Youth Service – National Youth Work Week & Statutory Guidance Update Presentation

7. Background Papers

None