

Community Learning and Development Review: Granton Youth Centre

Executive of the Council
Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families: North

27 March 2006

1 Purpose of report

The City of Edinburgh Children and Families Department now has a systematic programme to review the work of Community Learning and Development Centres and organisations on a regular basis. The outcomes of each review are reported individually to the Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families using similar procedures to those followed for school reviews and HMIE reports. This report advises the sub-committee on the outcomes of such a review.

2 Summary

This report deals with the findings of a review carried out at Granton Youth Centre in October 2005. It was published in March 2006, comments on strengths and also recommends areas for development.

3 Main report

3.1 The review was carried out using the Performance Indicators for Community Learning and Development and the national framework How Good is our Community Learning and Development? The review programme agreed with the organisation included:

- planning and management;
- partnership working; and
- building community capacity/personal development.

3.2 The review report is attached as Appendix A. The report commented favourably on the following strengths across the areas reviewed.

- a the strength of the project manager's leadership, commitment and drive;
- b the commitment, enthusiasm and positive attitude of the staff and volunteers; and
- c the management committee's commitment to the centre.

3.3 The report made recommendations upon which the organisation should act.

- a the management committee should undertake training to develop capacity and increase the membership;
- b the centre should consider the development of closer working partnerships with agencies such as social work and working together to ensure a co-ordinated approach to supporting vulnerable young people; and
- c the project should take action to resolve the contradiction between their approach to health and the smoking issue.

4 Conclusions

4.1 The positive comments noted earlier provide a basis upon which the organisation in consultation with the authority can address the above recommendations. A plan of action for implementation of the recommendations made in the report has been drawn up for the sub-committee's consideration. The Action Plan is attached as Appendix B. This statement will also be made available to the board of directors. The authority will monitor the organisation's progress towards addressing the above recommendations.

5 Recommendations

The sub-committee is recommended to:

- 5.1 note the project manager's leadership of the organisation, her commitment and drive;
- 5.2 note the commitment of the management committee to the centre;
- 5.3 note the positive attitude, commitment and enthusiasm of staff and volunteers; and

5.4 accept the Action Plan to meet the recommendations in the report.



Roy Jobson
Director of Children and Families

Appendices	Appendix A: Review Report Appendix B: Action Plan
Contact/tel	Sheila Brown 0131 469 3066
Wards affected	10
Background Papers	Nil

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

**Community Learning
and Development
Review**

Granton Youth Centre

March 2006

Community Learning and Development Review
Granton Youth Centre

The centre in context

Granton Youth Centre is a purpose built youth centre for 11-25 year olds. Opened in 2002, the centre was designed in consultation with local young people and provides community based support for young people, primarily but not exclusively, in the Granton and Royston/Wardieburn areas in the north west of the city.

Accommodation comprises a large central hall, with open plan mezzanine above, kitchen area, computer room, a small meeting room and staff base. The centre leases office space to Pilton Partnership and also has garage space used for project work at the rear of the building.

The centre is in receipt of revenue grant funding from the Children and Families Department of £31,212 per year. The centre receives additional funding from a range of trusts and organisations, including Pilton Partnership.

The centre has a management committee, which includes representation from the local Community Learning and Development team and Pilton Partnership. The centre is staffed by a project manager, four youth development workers and a cleaner. The centre also employs ten sessional youth workers and supports three volunteers.

The centre produces an annual development plan and the main priorities are:

- To ensure that young people have a safe and sustainable place in which to live
- To improve the employment prospects of young people
- To develop a positive attitude to the benefits of education in order to raise attainment levels
- To promote a healthier lifestyle, addressing issues surrounding life circumstances and improve access to health services for young people
- To address issues of community safety relating to young people
- To encourage participation in leisure and cultural activities

Review Remit

The agenda for the review was negotiated with the project manager and agreed at a meeting of the management committee. It was agreed that the review would focus on the authority themes of planning and management, partnership working and building community capacity/personal development.

Review Procedures

The review team visited the majority of the groups in the centre programme. Individual interviews were conducted with staff, volunteers, and members of the management committee. The review team also observed staff meetings and staff training sessions. Representatives of partner agencies, including community learning and development were also interviewed. A member of the Quality Improvement Team was involved as a 'shadow' reviewer.

Findings of the review

1. Planning and Management

Planning and management was very good overall. The centre's annual development plan was effectively linked to the current strategies for work with young people in the area, including those relating to community safety and the social inclusion partnership, Pilton Partnership. The project manager was responsible for the planning and co-ordination of all the planning processes. This included the annual development day that involved the staff team and the management committee, the outcomes of which were drafted into the annual development plan. The work of the staff and volunteers linked directly to the plan with individual work plans being created from the outcomes of the annual plan. All staff and members of the management committee demonstrated a clear understanding of the development plan and how it related to their role in the organisation. The plan reflected key local issues, such as the role of the centre in assisting young people to consider the impact of living in an area where so much renewal is being carried out.

The management committee displayed a high level of commitment to the centre and attendance at management committee meetings was good. Management committee members were actively involved in aspects of the programme, some for several years. The centre had undergone a number of significant changes in the past few years, including an almost complete change of staff team and a reappraisal of the direction of the organisation. Members of the management

committee had worked hard to cope with the level of change and those remaining formed a knowledgeable core. Membership also included three young people who were centre users, and Peer Leaders. However, the management committee membership was relatively low and the centre would benefit from both increased numbers and a broadening of experience of management committee members.

It is recommended that the management committee should undertake training to develop capacity and increase the membership.

The project manager co-ordinated the day-to-day running of the centre. She provided very effective leadership to the staff and volunteers, was well regarded by the staff team and by members of the management committee. Her dynamic style and approach to team development was clearly central to the evolution of the project. Each full time member of staff had an annual performance and career development meeting with the co-ordinator and staff supervision and support sessions were undertaken on a 4 to 6 weekly cycle. The staff team met regularly and the structure of meetings ensured a good balance between input and discussion. All staff had an opportunity to share information and discuss aspects of their work. The group was relaxed but focused with everyone contributing to the discussions. Staff were clear about their responsibilities and those of other colleagues. They were supportive of each other but prepared to challenge, and to offer experience and knowledge to resolve issues.

The centre had a comprehensive range of policies, which were made available to all members of staff through a staff handbook. A broad range of training was available to staff, including trainees, volunteers and peer leaders, and an individual training record was kept for all staff.

The project manager was also key in providing a strategic link to local youth work developments, for example, being chair of the Community Safety group locally and encouraging external organisations to use the centre.

2 Partnership Working

Partnership working was very good overall. The centre had developed a range of partnerships with both local and city-wide organisations, including Working Links, Youth Literacies, Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Muirhouse Development Group. All partners interviewed were positive about the role and work of the project and made comment on the change in range and nature of the programme since the project manager had taken up post.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award were involved in the Youth Peer Leaders group, supporting expedition work, and, during the period of the review, a number of young people were involved in an awards ceremony at the centre. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award highlighted the commitment and enthusiasm of workers and volunteers in the centre, and the support available for young people undertaking the Award, as key to the success of the project.

The steering group for the 'Youth Peer Leaders in the Community' met for the first time during the period of the review. In addition to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the five main youth work providers in the Greater Pilton had committed to share their experience and expertise in developing this aspect of the Centre's work. The project aimed to develop the skills and confidence of local young people aged 16-25 at risk of offending, by increasing the range of issue-based youth work in the area, influencing young people's attitudes about community safety, violence and territorialism.

Working Links collaborated with centre staff in the 'Getting Yer Heid Together', a ten week project run as part of a wider employment training scheme initiative. The training scheme provided a drop-in leading to an assessment phase. This led to people following one of three options; access to Job-search resources, attending the ten week course or intensive individual support or counselling followed by referral. 'Getting Yer Heid Together' provided skills training, anger management, managing stress and an opportunity for participants to learn more about themselves, getting and keeping a job. Participants were supported to move on to Telford College or one of three Academies, followed by employment. A total of 45 young people had gone through the course.

All partners commented on the willingness of staff, and the management committee, to support partnership developments.

As many of the young people involved in the centre attend local schools, it is recommended that the centre develop closer working partnerships with agencies such as social work and working together to ensure a co-ordinated approach to supporting vulnerable young people.

3 Building Community Capacity/Personal Development

This area of work was very good. The "Youth Peer Leader in the Community" offered a range of challenging and developmental opportunities to young people in the 16-25 year age group. Young people were trained and supported to become volunteer leaders in the community, following a 12-week course designed to increase skills, confidence and self-esteem. Specific sessions on issues such as violence and territorialism were included. The course also developed knowledge of the youth work field, including the roles and responsibilities of peer leaders, group work and one-to-one

skills. Participants were involved in reviewing each session and had opportunities to contribute to sessions. Participants were committed to and enthusiastic about the course.

The sessions observed during the review were well planned and made good use of participants' knowledge and experience. Participants were clear about the aims and purpose of the sessions and able to link learning to previous sessions. Course tutors provided effective support to individuals in the group, but also encouraged peer support. Learning logs were used to assess progression. The evaluation of the session was very thorough, reflecting on each component, the role of individual participants and impact.

Peer leaders worked as volunteer youth workers in the centre, some undertaking placements with other local youth work providers. Those working in the centre undertook specific responsibilities in clubs. They indicated a strong sense of being a valued part of the centre and that they were part of the team.

Young people attending groups and clubs were involved in planning their programme each term and were encouraged to contribute ideas throughout the programme. In some groups young people were involved in budget decisions and were supported to raise their own funds. The programme offered a wide range of open access activities including S1-S2 Boys, S1-S2 Girls, S3-S4 mixed intermediate club, and S5+ mixed group. Detached work took place one evening each week, making contact with young people on the streets and offering advice and information. Centre programmes were also made available. The centre contributed to the under 16s Open All Hours sessions on Fridays in Ainslie Park Leisure Centre.

The October school break occurred during the period of the review and additional activities were offered. These included two, single sex, outings to Fordell Firs. Both groups were involved in detailed pre-trip briefings. All participants on the trip that included an archery and assault course session were in attendance for the briefing and were informed of all requirements for the trip. An activity taster session, the first of a series of exercise sessions being introduced, was a 'body attack' session. The instructor was well prepared and fully involved the participants many of whom were involved in the Peer Leader programme.

Youth workers evaluated every session using a standard session recording sheet and young people were encouraged to contribute their feedback. Workers graded each session and indicated the evidence available to support this grading. All youth workers were involved in this process, with the lead being taken by different workers on different evenings. Everyone was clear about the

purpose and value of the exercise. Training was available to all youth workers and a support and supervision session was provided each term. All youth workers demonstrated a strong commitment to the centre. They were very positive and enthusiastic about the work they were doing, and very supportive of the young people they were working with. The youth workers all identified the staff and particularly the project manager as very supportive.

In addition to the above programme the centre had developed a lunchtime 'drop in' healthy eating initiative which enabled young people to cook low cost healthy food. Although this was proving popular there was a contradiction between this approach to health and with some people's approach to smoking.

It is recommended that the project should take action to resolve the contradiction between their approach to health and the smoking issue.

Summary

Commendable features

- The project manager is commended for her strong leadership, commitment and drive.
- The staff and volunteers are commended for their commitment, enthusiasm and positive attitude.
- The management committee are commended for their commitment to the centre.

Areas for development by the centre

- The management committee should undertake training to develop capacity and increase the membership.
- The centre should consider the development of closer working partnerships with agencies such as social work and working together to ensure a co-ordinated approach to supporting vulnerable young people.

- The project should take action to resolve the contradiction between their approach to health and the smoking issue.

Conclusion

The centre will be supported to prepare an action plan to meet the main recommendations in this report.

Examples of good practice identified in the commendable features will be recorded to enable their wider dissemination across the authority.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Learning & Development Review: Granton Youth Centre

Action Plan

Areas for development by the organisation

Recommendation 1

The management committee should undertake training to develop capacity and increase the membership.

Action

- The local community capacity building team will deliver training to the newly elected management committee following the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in March 2006.
- A number of young people who have completed the Peer Leaders course will become full members of the management committee at the AGM.

Recommendation 2

The centre should develop closer working partnerships with agencies such as social work and working together to ensure a co-ordinated approach to supporting vulnerable young people.

Action

- An approach will be made to the local Working Together Manager to negotiate a Working Together post being based in the centre to work closely with schools, particularly Broughton High School.
- By June 2006, the project manager will have tightened up administrative arrangements with Pupil Support Groups in relevant schools.

Recommendation 3

The project should take action to resolve the contradiction between their approach to health and the smoking issue.

Action

- From January 2006, smoking cessation workshops targeted particularly at young women will be arranged in partnership with local health promotion.
- Display material relating to smoking will be posted inside and outside the centre from January 2006.
- The smoking policy for staff and volunteers will be reviewed in February 2006.
- The management committee, through the project manager, will implement the smoking ban by 26 March 2006, in line with legislation.