

# Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision: Key partner perspective

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## Overview

Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP), within FCC Education and Youth directorate, prioritises partnership work. Flintshire County Council, Council Plan 2017-2023 sets out at Appendix Two details about how achievement is measured. This makes clear that critical to the core priority of being a 'Learning Council' is delivering and embedding the *Flintshire's Integrated Youth Services Strategy "Delivering Together"* as part of being:

- a 'Learning Council' (e.g. reducing first-time entrants and repeat offences by young people, increasing the participation of all young people, including higher risk groups such as young people that have engaged in offending behaviour, in employment, education and/or training); and
- a 'Supportive Council' that protects people from the risk of any form of abuse and makes communities safe places by working with partners to prevent crime, repeat crime and antisocial behaviour).

To do that, FIYP contributes funding and collaborates closely with partners within the voluntary and community sector. As part of understanding what is working well, what challenges there and priorities for moving forward in work to support the life chances and outcomes of young people that experience/are at more risk of greater vulnerability, FIYP commissioned George Partnership Limited to undertake five depth interviews with a sample of closest partners. These are:

- Catherine Carr, Manager, Barnardos, which is funded to support young carers;
- Nicky Evans, Senior Practitioner, BCUHB, managing SORTED which works to reduce substance misuse and its impacts amongst young people (funded in part by FIYP and integrated into the Flintshire Youth Justice Service which is part of FIYP);
- Sian Rogers, North and Mid Wales Director, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, which has been funded in response to an identified need to give Flintshire young people the chance to learn and socialise more in the the Welsh language;
- Gwennan Mair, Director of Creative Engagement, Theatre Clywd, which has been funded to help equip FIYP staff with skills and techniques for effective engagement of young people that are more vulnerable and to collaborate with young people that at greater risk in the development and delivery of drama and creative approaches that support integration and healthy relationships, self-esteem etc.; and
- Bev Carroll, C-Card Coordinator, BCUHB, which has been funded to develop resources to help schools and young people particularly sustain the benefits of innovative work to reduce exploitation and risky behaviours amongst young people, improve sexual health, healthy relationships and young people's self-esteem.

## What is working well

The consistent view of interviewees is that partnership work with FIYP and/or facilitated and nurtured by FIYP and the focus on working with young people at more risk is excellent:

Table One: What is working well

Key factor	Evidence includes:
<b>Partnership work with FIYP</b>	<p>All interviewees agreed partnership work with FIYP is excellent. Specific examples/ points raised are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A consistent view that the FIYP senior manager, Ann Roberts, provides excellent leadership, is open and communicates well with partners, and is committed to a greater community orientation. E.g. engaging Theatre Clwyd in team development/staff training to help equip youth club leaders with skills and techniques for effectively engaging young people that are more disaffected/at greater risk.</li> <li>• Making available the specialist resources of FIYP to schools and community organisations so that they can more effectively meet the needs of young people that are more disaffected/at greater risk e.g. Barnardos have been able to draw on FIYP staff to provide sexual health and drug and alcohol workshops for young carers, funding the resources that were previously unavailable for schools/young people once the Consent drama programme has been delivered, outreach youth workers working alongside SORTED, Police and Leisure to help reduce ASB and provide positive opportunities for young people to participate and working with Theatre Clwyd to equip them with the know-how to deliver a summer school.</li> <li>• Joint work to assess/map needs to develop bespoke services e.g. undertaking alongside Urdd Gobaith Cymru work that identified that young Welsh speakers lack sufficient access to social opportunities to speak Welsh and so supporting school based clubs that as the Urdd Gobaith Cymru Director notes are <i>'going even better than expected and would probably not have happened and so prevented &lt;Flintshire&gt; young people that want to speak Welsh to be able to do so.'</i></li> </ul>
<b>Nurturing wider partnerships</b>	<p>All interviewees agreed FIYP has been excellent wider partnerships. Specific examples/ points raised are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way in which the Consent programme funded/facilitated by FIYP draws together staff from IYP, BCUHB sexual health/school nurses, Theatre Clwyd, schools and SORTED to work with young people that are at greater risk/have experienced unhealthy relationships, poor self-esteem etc. Key impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The C-Card Coordinator and the Theatre Clwyd Director identify that multiagency staff now have more understanding of available support, how to signpost appropriately and how to support young people (as has happened) that come forward identifying that they have engaged in unhealthy behaviours which had made them feel bad, but they hadn't understood were unlawful and that they could be supported. This has enabled young people to access support.</li> <li>○ As multiagency staff have come to know each other more and what is available, they have been able to access additional resources e.g. information resources, discounted tickets.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barnardos identify that they have been supported to work significantly more closely with NEWCIS which is supporting much better transitions for young carers into adulthood, at the same time as they have been networked with other services (e.g. Families First and youth clubs) so that young carers are accessing mainstream provision like any other young person.</li> <li>• The Director, Urdd Gobaith Cymru identifies how they are helping signpost/refer/support young people to projects such as SORTED (whereas previously they would have been unsure how and not found so straightforward.)</li> </ul>

Key factor	Evidence includes:
<p><b>A focus on young people at greater risk</b></p>	<p>In interviews, this was largely taken for granted that FIYP and their services funded by FIYP focus on young people at greater risk. What comes out especially strongly, however, is the extent to which services are developed responsively and collaboratively with young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SORTED senior practitioner identifies how they have smooth access to key worker support through Resilience to enable young people exiting treatment (1:1 or group) programmes to build resilience and wellbeing: <i>'This is going really well</i> and is especially useful for young people that are at risk of/are NEET.</li> <li>• The C-Card Coordinator describes how working with FIYP has been <i>'a joy'</i> given the willingness to innovate programmes based on experience (e.g. embedding work on sexting into the programme</li> <li>• Theatre Clywd director describes how FIYP will often fund transport costs for young people that would otherwise not be able to attend the theatre.</li> <li>• The extent to which FIYP was encouraging a wider awareness of the ACEs agenda and requirements for how to inform practice development was also noted in interviews with Barnardos, SOFRTED and the C-Card coordinator.</li> </ul>

## What is more challenging

The challenges for the individual partners were quite different:

- For Barnardos, these relate primarily to a budget and resourcing environment which is generally year on year (at best) which has impacts on staff retention and recruitment and the ability to plan. That said, the Barnardos manager observes that FIYP has been *'excellent'* and *'always tries really hard'* which has had the effect of sustaining the young carers service for several years, even as other funding sources have reduced.
- For SORTED, these are partly operational given the multiagency nature of the team (with the effect of staff recruited by different services having different terms and conditions, management structures etc.) and partly the different approaches and policies schools have in respect of how young people with drug and alcohol needs are dealt with.

On the latter point, the Senior Practitioner notes that overwhelmingly most secondary schools engage well with SORTED and make referrals early, seeking to avoid especially permanent exclusions where a young person is found with cannabis or associated paraphernalia as an example. SORTED notes that this has been helped by joint work with FIYP which helps with making available a wider offer of support for young people at school.

- For the C-Card Coordinator, *'the challenge is just one of time'* noting that the excellent relationships and partnership work mean that there is a strongly responsive and needs-led approach.
- For Urdd Gobaith Cymru, the primary challenge is one of encouraging Welsh speakers to engage not just with the Welsh language youth forum (which in Flintshire is going very well) but also the wider Flintshire Youth Forum so that the needs of Welsh speakers are always understood within wider service planning. Like Barnardos, Urdd Gobaith Cymru also identifies the challenge of year on year funding cycles, but like Barnardos also observes that FIYP has been especially supportive and that having a Welsh focused youth worker funded by FIYP has been instrumental in fostering many more opportunities

for Welsh language speakers to speak and socialise in Welsh (as well as find out about other wider provision).

- For Theatre Clywd they note that without FIYP they would not be as community oriented and would not necessarily be as engaged with schools, for example. Theatre Clywd notes that a challenge can be that the very young people you want to attend the workshops and activities associated with their community education (e.g. work around identities, work around understanding what sexual consent is etc.) can sometimes be those that do not attend.

Theatre Clywd does not see that as a challenge and rather an opportunity- both to educate teachers about ensuring young people that at more risk attend (rather than be worried they might be disruptive so don't get sent, although this takes place infrequently) and to reach out further into community-based work e.g. with the summer school (supported by FIYP) and through work in youth clubs and with youth outreach workers.

## Key priorities moving forward

All partners describe evaluation and monitoring approaches that help evidence that a difference is being made through the funding made available through FIYP; and especially so for young people at greater risk.

For Theatre Clywd, this is more grounded in how young people have participated with the work, the type of discussion that follows and what can happen next e.g. increasingly Theatre Clywd is '*viewed as a safe space*' and so young people meet up there (and through this, some have started volunteering and showing an interest in theatre as a career which they had never contemplated). Moreover, there are those much '*more hard hitting*' outcomes such as described in Table One of young people coming forward in days after watching the Consent play to report their own experiences (which has enabled counselling and therapeutic support to be provided).

Also, to note is that SORTED and Urdd Gobaith Cymru are currently working to improve the meaningfulness of reports.

- Urdd Gobaith Cymru within the context of their striving towards Silver in the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales (they are currently Bronze accredited).
- The SORTED Senior Practitioner, for example, notes that expectations from the Area Planning Board have largely focused on quantitative reporting (often focused on inputs and outputs) and so have not sufficiently well described the journey of young people that have been supported, including progress on key indicators such as self-esteem, feeling more in control, re-engaging with education, training or employment etc. The Senior Practitioner notes that this is not about FIYP as such- rather other funders- and so through their assessment and review work, they can readily demonstrate the progress made with young people they work with.

The most common key priority is one of building on the excellent partnership working with even more service integration to effectively meet the needs of young people at greater risk. Three interviewees describe the tightened budgetary context as one which commands greater creativity and networking of resources so that this happens. It was noted, for example, that even with tightening resources, there is still a diverse offer for young people in Flintshire (both statutory and community) and that it is not always as well understood as it could be. Actions which can help with mutual understanding of the range of services available was identified as especially important in this context.

For individual partners, they also identified some relevant priorities specific to their organisations and where collaboration with FIYP might help them to progress:

- For Barnardos, the primary focus is sustaining and strengthening the young carers service ensuring that even more, young carers have the most opportunities for accessing wider community provision.
- For SORTED, they're keen to review and strengthen their operational model so that they can have more work led by one staff member with one school, so that young people particularly that move through group work and 1:1 work can have the same staff member and that staff member also can develop stronger relationships within one or two secondary schools. SORTED also identifies that the work to improve the evidencing of the journey of young people currently underway and planning to help articulate their contribution to the Government's Ten-Year Strategy are priorities too.
- For the C-Card Coordinator, a key priority is taking forward learning that has come from the most recent delivery of the Consent programme- and particularly the workshops that follow these. These have helped draw more attention to the increasingly ubiquitous nature of online pornography and how this influences (wrongly) young people's understanding of what constitutes consent; and so, this needs to be reflected in future programme development (as has happened in earlier iterations involving sexting and inappropriate images on social media).
- For Urdd Gobaith Cymru, the key priority is encouraging more connectivity between the Welsh language youth forum and the wider Flintshire Youth Forum.
- For Theatre Clywd, how to make their projects sustainable and the relationships they are developing with wide-ranging partners including schools, health services, youth services and community organisations sustainable too.