Town Council Youth Service Report April – July 2020

Background
On March 23rd, 2020 we saw the UK lockdown imposed, the Youth Service had closed and the Youth Work Team Leader was on compassionate leave, followed by annual leave.
The team had begun to plan the week prior to lockdown, what would happen if we followed suit of other European countries in lockdown and how the team could still offer a youth work provision. In the absence of the Youth Work Team Leader, the Senior Youth Support Worker stepped up to the challenge to implement the first part of offering digital challenges and a quiz for the young people.

Since April, the Team offered a variety of online sessions, 1-2-1 chats, group chats and digital content upload via social media. In June, as requested by young people, we stopped the video tutorials and increased online sessions.

By July, the lockdown restrictions had eased significantly and as a result the youth workers have seen a rapid decline in young people attending sessions, however engagement on the group chat still remains high.

Youth service and provision: April and May
Tutorial Videos uploaded to Facebook page and group
Monday – Cooking or Growing Video Tutorial
Tuesday – Music Video Tutorial
Group Challenge set on Facebook group chat and page.
Wednesday – Challenge set to the YP to complete
Chat with a youth worker
Daily at 1pm on Facebook
Online Zoom Session
Thursday Quiz 6:30pm

Youth service and provision: June and July
Group Challenge set on Facebook group chat and page.
Wednesday – Weekly riddles
Chat with a youth worker
Weekdays at 1pm on Facebook.
Online Zoom Sessions
Monday Scattegories game 3pm (from July at 11am)
Tuesday Gameshow 6:30pm
Wednesday Scattegories 3pm (from July at 630pm)
Thursday Quiz 6:30pm

Successes
In the first two months, April and May, the team had a good level of engagement from the current members at the online zoom quiz with the regular young people attending weekly. The young people set the quiz round themes weekly.

A group chat was set up between all current members of young people and the four Youth Workers on Facebook. This has continued to have lots of engagement, communication, and support. The Team have continued this method of communication throughout lockdown with a minimum of one youth worker being online at 1pm each day. The engagement still remains high even with lockdown restrictions lifted.

Some young people have contacted youth workers 1-2-1 through Facebook for additional support and guidance – whilst this has been sporadic, Youth Workers have continued to check their professional Facebook throughout the week for young people who have required additional support.

Challenges

The online video tutorials were not receiving the viewing expected and only one young person engaged with the cooking tutorials and one with the music videos.

The young people were consulted and requested additional online sessions rather than tutorial videos, the team adapted and increased the sessions from June 1st however the attendance and engagement from the young people was poor.

The team liaised with other youth agencies and found this was a common trend across the South West.

Recording the engagement has been challenging, as it is not possible to put the length of time engaged in discussion against a young person on social media as it does not give updated time lengths.

Looking Ahead

- The Team will be exploring the options for Youth Work going forward in August, whilst considering the health and safety implications for both young people and staff.
- Two team members will be completing youth work level 2 and level 3.
  Both youth workers, need to complete a group project. the team are exploring possibilities
- Consider working in partnership with other organisations such as Youth Connect, St. John's Church and Community at 67
- Contacting local primary and secondary schools to see what provision they could offer and how they could support;
  a) young people at risk of being coming NEET
  b) young people who may need additional support / mentoring
  c) young people who have poor mental health and wellbeing
  (before, after and during Covid19)