



YOUTH ACTION
PROJECT

Youth Action Project
Annual Report 2015/2016



Board of Directors

Board members

Our sincere thanks to all board members and advisors for their continuing support throughout the past year.

Cllr A Miller – Board member – Resigned on 11th November '15

Ms L Jamieson – Board member – Appointed 8th July '15

Mr A Mount – Board member

Mr L Leyden – Board member – Appointed 11th July '15

Mr L McMillan – Youth Board member – Resigned on 11th November '15

Mr W Steele – Board member – Resigned on 11th November '15

Mrs H Wilson – Board member (W.L. College representative)

Ms A Carruthers – Board member – Appointed June '14

Ms J Robeson – Chair of the Board – Resigned on 11th November '15

Ms J Turner – Treasurer

Advisors to the Board

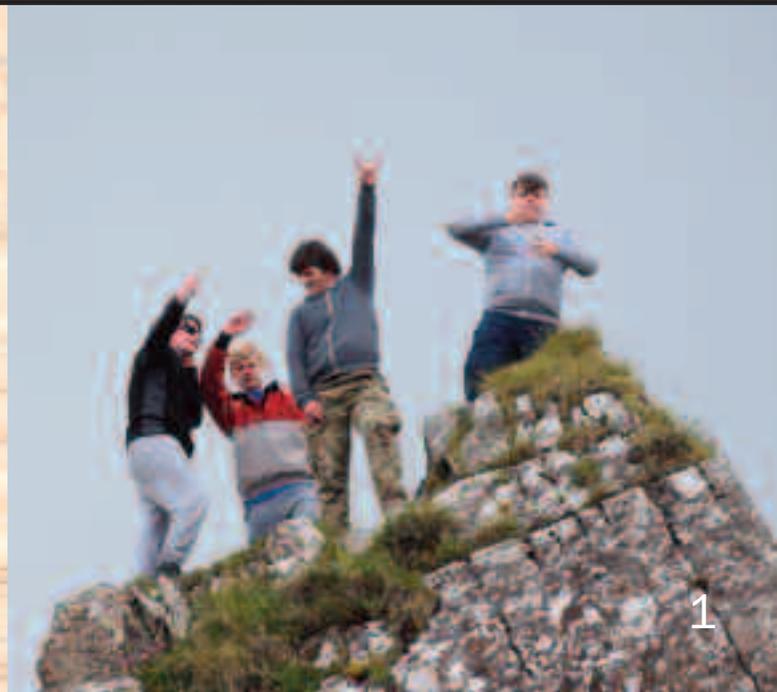
Jim Dixon – West Lothian Councillor

Beverley Akinlami – West Lothian Council Link Officer

Jock Kerr – Honorary President

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Foreword

Looking Back

This is, as many of you know, my last time as part of Y.A.P. Due to personal reasons and other commitments I am coming off the Y.A.P. Board. It is rather fitting that I leave my time in youth work with an organisation based in Craigshill, as many years ago I volunteered to help run a youth club in Letham Youth Wing, that led to involvement in a number of youth clubs in Craigshill and Dedridge, plus some time in L.A.Y.C. and Youth Club Scotland, before ten years ago, ending up in Y.A.P.

Over the years as an enthusiastic amateur youth worker, I have had the pleasure of working with many dedicated and talented professionals such as Max Cruickshank, Jim Rooney and not forgetting our present Project Director Helen, thanks to you all for putting up with me.

So what have I learnt, firstly, young people haven't changed all that much over the years, yes, your music is different, you dress differently but your hopes and fears for the future are similar to young people of the past. Y.A.P. and similar groups will help you develop the talents you have and also help you overcome any problems you might face, so don't be shy.

However the biggest hurdle to be overcome; is to convince the powers to be, that money spent today on young people, is money saved tomorrow.

So in closing, I will say as I say to my grandsons, MAKE IT HAPPEN – people in Y.A.P. will support you, but it's up to you, it's your life, don't wake up in thirty years' time and say if only!

Andy Mount



Work with Young People – Third Sector Engagement

The Youth Action Project is one of the largest third sector charitable organisations in West Lothian, who provide services to young people. Having been established since December 1992, we have engaged with many thousands of young people and their families. My colleagues and I, several of whom have developed the organisation with me over many years, have powerful memories of the extreme challenges faced by some of the young people supported. I can say with confidence, that we also have a huge number of fond and heart – warming memories of those young people, who have gained confidence, learned new skills, successfully managed health issues, or significantly improved their behaviour and lifestyle choices, during their time working with us.

Working within the third sector can provide an opportunity for staff to work more creatively and informally than within statutory remits, although we all still operate within strict procedural frameworks, the non-statutory services can often seem less threatening to young people and families. The services from third sector organisations such as the Youth Action Project compliment statutory provision. I have experienced very positive partnership working within West Lothian, such as, the Supporting

Families Project, soon to be moving into a new merged project, called the Whole Family Support Service. As a member of the Early and Effective Intervention Group, Mental Health and Wellbeing Screening group, Young People’s Support Providers group and others, I have seen how information can be shared professionally, in line with the GIRFEC principles, and how resources stretch further in this difficult financial climate, to ensure that children and young people are provided with quality services that suit their needs. Third sector organisations such as the Youth Action Project can often provide the “out of the box” solution, or the missing jigsaw piece.

The third sector organisations, or voluntary sector, as more commonly named in recent years, are moving away from the term voluntary as we are reputable, and professional businesses, from the small to the very large. Volunteering is still a very important aspect of our organisations; we alone have had over 5000 hours provided by our team of volunteers this year. This is an aspect of the work we value extremely highly, but with tendering, commissioning and procurements in operation more and more, we have to work together to ensure a strengthening sector.



With the rejuvenation of the Gateway, the Third Sector Strategic group (formerly VSSG) have restructured and are aiming to act as a forum and direct conduit with West Lothian Council, NHS, and Police etc. I am an active member of this group and also Chair of the fairly recently established Children and Young People's Third Sector Working group. These groups provide members, to represent the wider third sector at local and national strategic groups and committees. We are all working together, alongside West Lothian Social Enterprise Network to ensure the third sector are truly recognised and valued for its contribution to children, young people and the wider communities of West Lothian.

Effective communication is vital, from the relationship between children, their family members and operational front line staff, through to senior officers, Chief Executives and Politicians. Seamless systems need to be in place, we need to be responsive to the needs of communities, but realistic and transparent about what can be delivered. It is a valuable learning process being a third sector representative and partner in the Scottish Government Realigning Children's Services Pilot Project in West Lothian, and National GIRFEC Third Sector Project, both with key aims to develop and maximise the positive outcomes for Children and Young people.

All that said, the fundamental pleasure of being involved in this project is seeing children and young people have fun, enjoy learning, form healthy relationships and be resilient enough to cope with

things that life throws at them.

A big thank you to all of my colleagues and true partners, of which there are many.

Helen Davis, Project Director

Services provided during 2015-16

The information below provides a snapshot of our services, further details can be provided by contacting the Project Office.

Armadale – Thursday and Friday evening sessions 6.30-9pm at the Youth Space – varied programmes designed with young people

Bathgate – Saturday Street Fever based in Bathgate Academy Sports Unit – Saturdays, 6.30-9.00pm – Open to all aged 12-18 years, a sports based programme

Blackburn – Wednesdays – 6.30-9.30pm – Blackburn Community Centre. Open to all aged 13+ A drop-in, advice and support based programme with activities

Craigshill – Friday – Offbeat (partnership project) Riverside Youth wing – 1-4pm
An arts and music based programme for 12-18 year olds.

East Calder – Booze You Looze – Sports and support based programme based at Excite Leisure – East Calder Sports Centre, Fridays – 1-4pm.

Our thanks to the Alcohol and Drug Partnership for providing funding for these projects, they make a significant contribution to the reduction of Anti-Social Behaviour and substance use amongst young people. Although the projects may be based around the arts/music or just informal chats and activities, many young people are offered additional support from YAP staff or partner agencies as a follow on from engagement in these projects, and positive relationships are built up between staff and young people.

Drop-ins and support based youth work

Addiewell – The Pit Stop or Community House – Mondays – 6-8.30pm

Craigshill – Monday drop-in at Riverside Youth wing 6-8pm – Music, arts, pool etc.

Broxburn – Cyber café drop-in – (corner of Almondell Road & Strathbrock Place) Monday & Wednesdays 6-9pm, Fridays 2-5pm

Stoneyburn – The Wee Croft drop-in (Glenview Pavilion)

Monday 6-9pm, Wednesday 6-9pm, Fridays 2-5pm. Also, a specific girls group – Thursdays 6-9pm.

These projects offers support, advice, computer access, employment and education information, cooking, arts and crafts, in a safe environment

Music Projects

Livingston, Craigshill – Tuesdays – informal music group – Riverside youth wing 6.30-9pm – learn to play guitars, drums, sing – have fun

Armadale – Wednesdays – Armadale Youth space – 7-8.30pm – as above

Education based Programme

Journey to Employment groups – Craigshill, Craigsfarm & West Lothian College

Wednesdays & Thursdays – Full day programme offering SVQ modules and a life skills programme for those struggling with mainstream education.

Social Enterprise Training Programmes

Tooled Up – workshop based practical skills sessions in Eucal Business Centre – Craigshill Road, Craigshill Livingston – opposite the fire station – These programmes can be tailor made to suit groups either aged 14-16 or 16+. There is also some scope for small groupwork or 1-1 work within this facility.

Community Garden Project – A new development aspect of our work this year.

Intensive Support groups – These are referral only groups, often single sex based projects supporting those young people Looked After or with specialist support needs.

Boghall – Sunshine Café – A functional café where young people can access training and practical catering experience.

We also provide 1-1 Early Intervention and Counselling support work, a Befriending Service, Summer Activity and Peer Education and Involvement programmes, some of these projects are highlighted later in the report.

Our Streetwork service operates every Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings and at specifically requested times throughout West Lothian in conjunction with WL Council Community Safety Unit.

Statistical Data

Our data recording system ensures that we can accurately detail the number of young people engaged with the organisation, their age, gender, address, postcodes, health issues, schools attended etc. In addition to the generic information gathered, we also measure the achievements gained by the young people and overall outcomes of the work.

We use a multi – faceted approach to measuring outcomes achieved by young people, as we have specific hard indicators such as certificates and qualifications gained by young people, together with soft, but equally important, indicators, for example, that young people’s levels of self – confidence and aspirations have risen, willingness to participate in education or training programmes and recognised positive attitudinal and behavioural change.

As an organisation, we have for many years engaged with a higher number of young men throughout almost all aspects of our work. We have introduced some girls only work this year, as a pilot, to assess if this is a preferred process for young women to access services. We also acknowledge, that young men are represented disproportionately in youth justice, police figures and exclusions or non- engagement with school, particularly in the 14+ age group. Our gender ratio was 69.64% male to 30.26% female.

The following tables provide a breakdown of our clients. There was an average engagement length of 8 sessions per young person, this may equate with EEL Interventions or counselling sessions, but other engagements would vary significantly, from a young person simply requiring a one off advice session, to another who may attend a groupwork programme weekly for several months.

Total attendances			8950
Individuals worked with			1120
Male			780
Female			339
Age	Total	Male	Female
6	2	2	0
7	1	1	0
8	4	3	1
9C5	3	2	
10	16	6	10
11	61	42	19
12	136	90	46
13	161	104	57
14	174	124	50
15	202	141	61
16	161	117	44
17	79	56	23
18	60	48	12
19	23	17	6
20	6	4	2
21	10	8	2
22	2	1	1
23	1	1	0
24	0	0	0
25	1	1	0
Unknown	15	11	4

INtegr8 Befriending Service

The last year has been challenging for INtegr8 in terms of the limited funding and resources that were available to deliver a service which always comes with high demand. Despite being unable to boost our team of volunteers this year due to lack of funding, I am pleased that our current Befrienders were able to provide support, encouragement and time out to as many young people as were supported during 2015/16.

To explain what our service means to the young people it supports, this year I asked a young person to share her thoughts. This is what Ebonie had to say:

"Befriending means a lot to me because I have someone like my Befriender who I can trust, turn to and talk to when things are bothering me.

Befriending helps a lot cos it gets things off my mind and helps me realise that when there's really worse things going on in my life that are bothering me, there's always a bright side to it. In 2013 my dad became really not well and we found out he had cancer. That really made me struggle in life and all I thought about was that. Befriending helped take it off my mind because I was taken out for sessions and I got to talk to my Befriender about how I was feeling and it helped a lot because I got it off my chest.

Befriending will help others because if they come to a low point in life, it helps them concentrate on other things, other than the things that are bothering them and helps them feel a lot better.



You also get the chance to do a lot of activities like going to Deep Sea World, the Safari Park, the Cinema, Time Capsule, Going for walks and Going for food."

Thank you to Ebonie for taking the time to describe her experience for this year's annual report, and thank you also to my team of dedicated volunteers who each make a difference to the lives of the young people they support. On a positive note we are exploring new developments and funding opportunities for this service during the summer months of 2016.

Angie, Befriending Co-ordinator.

Statistics – April 2015 to March 2016

- 23 enquiries logged into waiting system
- 8 enquiries from members of the public looking for a volunteering opportunity
- No induction training delivered during this year
- 29 young people received 1-1 Befriender support
- 16 trained and vetted community volunteers delivered Befriender support to young people
- The service can support up to 22 active matches at any given time
- Occasionally, volunteers will support more than 1 young person in their role

Counselling Service

It became very apparent due to the number of referrals received by our organization requesting counselling services for young people via the Early and Effective Intervention group, Education Services, internal referrals and more recently, through our involvement with the Mental Health and Wellbeing screening group, that it was imperative that we continue this provision. I would like to thank our previous counsellor Karen Balfour, for her commitment and the professional service that she offered during her time with the organisation. In February 2016, Linda Page, took over the position as Counsellor within the project, and fortunately with Linda's wealth of experience we continue to provide an extremely valuable service, as comments below demonstrate. Unfortunately due to funding restrictions we can only provide the counselling service for two days per week. Waiting lists are sadly the norm for all services providing counselling.

It has been a busy year with the counselling service. There has been many complex cases but there also has been really good outcomes. Sometimes the small changes make all the difference to a young person's life. Helping them to view themselves positively is a constant challenge in this work. – **Linda Page, Counsellor.**

Some of the comments from young people provided with counselling support are:-

(Written in their own words)

1. *"This sounds proper cheesy BTW but it's the truth. When I first found out I was getting counselling, I thought it would've been a waste of time and nothing*

would ever get better because I was at such a low point in my life and my confidence just wasn't there at all. Even after my first session with Linda I felt like things could possibly get better in time and I was right, every time I had an appointment with Linda, I felt that bit better about myself and now I can't believe how far I've come just by telling someone else about how I felt and getting advice that I actually took into consideration. My confidence is back as well as feeling more confident than I did before and I am thankful for Linda's help"

2. *"Well I was very pleased with your counselling experience. As I found it very beneficial and helped me a lot. I feel that I am doing a lot better due to the counselling as I had someone to talk about stuff at home and it took my mind off most the bad stuff and helped me to try and keep my cool".*

3. *"I think talking really helps. Especially when you understand, as it just helps to clear my mind and I hope this continues because I don't have anyone else I can trust". Also told me that her mum asked her the reason she came home so happy when she had went out so sad and angry, she told her it was because she had seen me that day.*

4. *"It helps a lot more than what you know. It is great because you feel as if you're not getting judged upon and you feel more comfortable about opening up about your feelings and what is bothering you. – Well that's what I think".*

5. *"I think since I have started to talk to someone it has helped me a lot. You have helped me feel better about myself and have helped me through tough situations. I think the counselling is really good".*

The Music Project (YAP Music)

The Youth Action Project has provided access to informal music sessions for young people of West Lothian for many years. Our experienced music staff are also keen youth workers; therefore music tuition and the opportunity to learn new instruments, song writing and performing, are not the only things on offer. Our staff and volunteers will provide a friendly environment where young people can socialise, get the opportunity to practise and jam with friends, they can also get involved in Accredited Opportunities through our continued Partnership with Youth Scotland and UK Youth in the BIG Music Project. Following the great success in supporting four young people in gaining Platinum Youth Achievement awards we have successfully secured funding for a further two years to recruit and support ten more Music Champions. They will design their own programmes and get the opportunity to mix with young people involved in other music Hubs throughout Scotland and UK wide – another great opportunity.

Our thanks also to Youthlink Scotland and the CashBack for Communities Fund; our successful funding application has allowed the continuation of the weekly Tuesday YAP Music Club in Riverside Youth Wing from 6.30-9pm – all welcome aged 12-21 years. This fund supports our sessional music staff, without which we could not operate.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my colleagues for their continued hard work, particularly Lorna Thomas, who will be moving on to new ventures in her life in the summer of 2016. She has provided an enormous contribution to the organisation.

We also wish Sean Mailer and his family our continued best wishes and support for 2016-7, following Sean's serious illness, he has made a remarkable recovery and we welcome his return to YAP Music.

We continue to operate our smaller music club in Armadale Youth Space and have plans to start another group in the Chill Out Zone (COZ), in Bathgate, later in the year. Young people involved in our music group often get the opportunity to play live gigs at community events and at national level, so come and join us!

The following comments reflect the views of some of our new members.

Yap Music Club quotes

"Yap is good because I can play my guitar and hang out with friends and generally have a good time. Also the equipment is pretty good".

Conor Pirie



"Yap is really good for my confidence and I feel my guitar skills have improved a lot. It's a great place to come to and play with other folks".

Adam McCulloch

"Yap has helped my Bass playing a lot because it has given me a chance to play with other people and learn new songs. Yap is fun and is a laid back environment, filled with good equipment and good fun people".

Kyle Broadfoot

"Yap has helped me by giving me a place to practise with my band. It's cheap, local and offers instruments to play on. It is a great place for new bands and to meet other people".

Jai Campbell

Music Academies

The Summer YAP Music Academies continue to evidence the huge musical talent that we have in West Lothian, thanks to the continued financial support of West Lothian Council Arts Service – Community Arts grant fund and Community Safety Funding. We continue to provide approximately 30 young people each summer with a great experience. Tuition from professional musicians, song writing skills, technical support, recording experience and live performance, but most importantly learning and having fun through music.

"At my time during the Yap Academy, I got the chance to meet other people who were into music and I learned that I can sing with people with the same interests and make new friends through the academy, they have staff that that will help you and teach you new things, and you can keep the experience for a life time".

Tristan Tang



Alcohol Diversion Projects

Fortunately, the local Alcohol and Drug Partnership supported the following Projects during 2015-6; the work of these projects plays a significant impact along with the work of West Lothian Council's Community Safety Unit and Police in reducing Anti-Social Behaviour displayed by some young people.

Booze You Looze

A Project operating in partnership with Excite Sports Centre in East Calder who provides the premises and when required, staff support. The project runs every Friday afternoon from 1-4pm. Staff encourage young people to engage in and try new sports, enjoy general fitness activities and provide a listening ear and advice for young people. Many of the young people who have used this facility over the years still pop back in, to update staff on how they are doing, some have offered volunteer support, a great example to the younger age group. Our thanks go to partners from W.L.Council Sports Unit and Youth Services; who assist us on a weekly basis with this project.

Armadale Youth Space

This facility is an independent unique space for young people. The Alcohol Diversion Funds cover partial costs for this facility. The Youth Action Project work in partnership with Armadale Community Education Association, West Lothian Council Youth Services and colleagues on the Armadale Youth Issues group; in the management of this facility.

The space provides Youth clubs, drop-ins, a music group, groupwork and is a great space from which to hold support sessions and counselling. Young people have a real sense of ownership of this facility.

Saturday Street Fever

This project runs from The Sports Unit attached to Bathgate Academy, our appreciation goes to the Management Committee who allow us the use of the facility on Saturday evenings. Young people have access to the Sports Hall, football pitch and table tennis, as well as a dance/fitness trainer, provided through Popskool, our thanks for their continued commitment to the project. We also recognise the additional support from Dunedin Canmore Housing Association with their financial contribution to this project.

Young people from a wide geographic area attend these sessions from Bathgate, Armadale, Blackburn and Livingston as well as the local community of Boghall. Previous group users have assisted as extremely valuable volunteers within this project.

Blackburn

The Youth Action Project have worked in Blackburn for many years now, the Alcohol Diversion Fund has supported some of our work in the village in conjunction with support from Community Action Blackburn. The weekly drop-in at the Community Centre supports some of the young people who are experiencing difficulties in school, or just want a safe place to meet. Through this drop-in, young people have gained advice on employment, school issues, health and relationship support, drug and alcohol advice and much more. The young people have become involved in things far wider than the drop-in, such as Tooled Up, music groups, residential and volunteering opportunities. We aim to continue working with local agencies and schools, to reduce levels of anti-social behaviour and substance use and to assist in raising the aspirational levels of

some young people. We will support and encourage the good work already carried out by many young people of Blackburn.

"I've been getting into trouble recently, sometimes in school and in the community, The Youth Action Project is working with me in my local drop-in and I have a place at the Tooled Up workshop, learning practical skills, the staff are helpful."

Gareth 14

Offbeat

A partnership project based around the arts and music held in Riverside Youth Wing in Craigshill every Friday from 1-4pm. The Youth Action Project work with Council Youth workers to provide young people with a safe place to meet socialise and try their hand at learning an instrument, jamming, playing pool, cooking and trying out a variety of art and media projects. We encourage engagement in Inter agency work and several of the young people have been involved in projects with older community members through the local Good Neighbourhood network. We have had tremendous support from the W.L. Council Arts Services providing quality freelance artists who have given young people the opportunity to try sessions in Aerosol Art, Digital Media development, DJ Skills and many others.

Intensive Support Groups

Referral based groups for young men and women who experience chaotic lifestyles.

These groups include LAC young people and those who require additional support to make positive choices. These groups were piloted for 4 months during the winter and due to positive results are continuing in slightly different formats but with the same client groups in 2016/17.



Tooled Up – Practical Skills Programmes

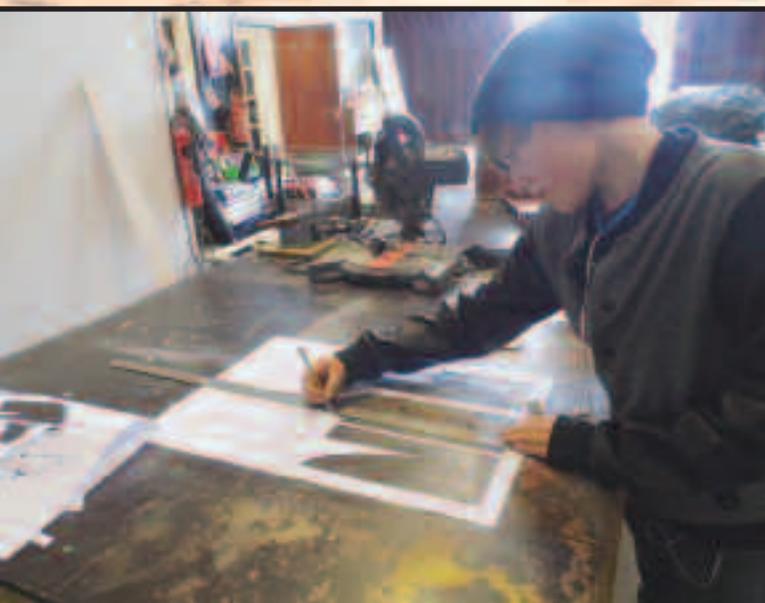
The Toolled Up programme has become embedded into the work of the Youth Action Project, providing a practical training opportunity for those young people who are struggling in mainstream education, clearly wanting their first experience of a supportive workshop or outdoor environment programme and an opportunity to try something new. The programmes help young people who due to health issues or through difficulties in their lives, have found employment or further education, out of their reach, at this stage of their lives. That said, the workshop is a working environment and young people must adhere to Health and Safety regulations and be willing to work as part of a team. We operate as a Social Enterprise as well as a training experience, therefore deadlines and timescales for production and completion of jobs can be a fine balance for staff. It is often the first experience young people have of responsibility to complete a job/task for someone other than themselves, teacher or family member.

The following examples demonstrate the work carried out within the Toolled Up Project:-

Joined Up is a project name for the partnership programme that we piloted this year with West Lothian College. We selected, in consultation with young people, a group who were keen to gain an SVQ module in joinery. The modular requirements were built into the programme and an approved lecturer assessed the work produced, to ensure that standards were met for the accredited certificate. This pilot programme has been a learning curve but thanks to the support of W.L. College and Community Action Blackburn, who assisted in financing the pilot scheme, 4 young people gained SVQ accreditation. This pilot has ensured that we now have all procedures in place for a larger number of students to gain accredited qualifications through our placements, in addition to practical and life skills experiences.

"This module was a good opportunity to use my practical skills to gain a qualification for work I was already doing. We had to build planters using recycled pallet materials for a garden project. The planter we built as part of this module was built using joints we had practiced and been assessed on. Once the frame was assembled we then had to clad it with our recycled pallets."

Brendan McCarney



Community Garden Project supported by the Royal Horticultural Society & Almond Housing

We have been fortunate in improving our links with Almond Housing this year, resulting in them allocating us a piece of ground, previously unused to develop a small community garden for Craigshill. This area in Hobart Street has been developed into a community garden space. We have been very fortunate in working with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in the development of the community garden work, thanks to their kind financial contribution and expertise, we were provided with the support of a freelance landscape architect, who helped us work with young people to plan the framework of the community garden. This involved consultation workshops and visits to other community garden projects to learn from their experiences. The plans were created based around a recycling and edible growing theme, and with the support of Liz Stewart and Mairi Coxon, a Development Officer with RHS, our garden is now established and moving towards producing our first crop of vegetables. We can't thank them enough for their expertise and patience.

This project will be a partnership project with other Craigshill Initiatives, we will be working with local partners, such as the Craigshill Good Neighbourhood Network, Almond Housing, local schools, Craigshill Greenspace, Community Council and West Lothian Council to ensure that young people understand how to become involved in growing edible crops, and how to contribute into their local communities.



Tooled Up – Case Study

The following case study, provides a clear insight into how the Youth Action Project supports young people. An individual may be referred through school, a Social worker, voluntary organisation or self-referred: all young people engaged with our organisation, can experience a journey of opportunities.

L.T. – Aged 14, Blackburn

“I had previously worked with Barry and the Youth Action Project when I was in primary 6 and 7, as part of the Blackburn Primary Schools annual conference, organised by Community Action Blackburn in Partnership with local agencies.

I have now been working with Tooled Up for about 7 months and have had the chance to be involved in some great projects. Including;

Craigshill Community Garden Project

Addiewell War Memorial upgrade

Addiewell Primary School Garden

While working with Tooled Up, I have learned a lot of practical, and life skills. I now have all the skills required to design and build a lot of different sizes and styles of raised bed garden planters. As well as the practical skills I have learned, I have also been given the chance to take part in other activities through the project. I attended the Cool Down Crew with the fire service and was lucky

enough to be chosen to attend a week long residential during the summer with Joe and Evelyn, where I got to try lots of new things, like;

- *Rock Climbing*
- *Kayaking*
- *Hiking*
- *Fishing*
- *Mountain Boarding*
- *Archery*
- *Problem Solving and Team Building*

I also attended an overnight camping trip with Barry, Alex and a group of lads from Addiewell. Needless to say there wasn't a great deal of sleeping, thanks to Craig's all night laughing.

Tooled Up and the Project has been great for me. I have spent a lot of my life being bullied, picked on and isolated. As a result of this, my confidence is really low. I don't like to attend school, go out and about in my community, or talk to many other young people. I have also been physically and verbally attacked a lot in the past. Through my work with Tooled Up, 1-1 support from Barry and the residential experiences with Joe, Evelyn and Alex, along with the other opportunities I have been given, I feel some of my confidence coming back. I am also starting to find it easier to talk to the other boys in my Tooled Up group, attend school more consistently, and I am now starting to look at my anger



Journey to Employment – J2E

The Youth Action Project once again enjoyed an excellent experience, working in partnership with West Lothian College, delivering our Journey to Employment Course for 4th year students throughout West Lothian. The sections below describe the content and outcomes of this course.

The statements from group participants speak for themselves as to the benefits that they gain from being part of the programme. An excellent validation of the hard work put in by my colleagues, college lecturers and support staff.

Discussions / Sessions / Awareness Workshops include, but are not limited to:

- Teamwork / Team Building
- Motivation
- Relationships – trust, friendships, work etc
- Confidence & Self Esteem
- Employability – transferable skills, presentation, interviews, applications, cvs, opportunities, education, training
- Goal Setting – particularly working towards youth achievement
- Communication – verbal, non-verbal, written
- Problem Solving – including conflicts
- Attitude, Values & Behaviour – respect, acceptance, changing, coping strategies

- Portfolio Development – for youth achievement award
- Reflective Practice
- Research
- Work life balance – what you want to do / achieve outside of employment / education / training

Harm Reduction and Awareness:

- Personal Safety – risk assessment
- Social Media
- Antisocial Behaviour
- General Health & Well Being
- Sexual Health
- Mental Health
- Drugs & Alcohol

Outcomes – On successful completion of the programme (some, or all of these):

- All students who have applied to attend full time at West Lothian College will be offered an interview.
- Level 4 Communication
- Level 4 ICT
- Bronze Youth Achievement Award (minimum level)



Comments from J2E Students this year.

I was surprised at the amount of stuff I learned and did. I felt really good that I could learn that much.

Sam

I feel proud with how much I have achieved with J2E and thought it was really fun. I Work life balance – what you want to do / achieve outside of employment / education / training

I felt safe in J2E as we always had someone to talk to if we needed advise / help and J2E was a safe environment.

Chelsea

It was really important and very interesting as there is so much that I have learned . . . we have been included in helping each other and getting help and we got listened to . . .

Jamie

I was surprised that I managed to learn so much stuff in a short space of time. It was useful because I can add this to my CV and it will help me in the future.

Stuart

I was surprised at how well I did in my Communication and ICT, I found doing college applications and CVs useful. Whenever we got upset, team workers were there to talk to and easy to talk to.

Amy

I feel really proud that I have learnt a lot during this time. I was surprised how much fun it was. It gave me really useful information that I can use in the future. I feel because I came here, I have been physically better, losing weight and my mental health is better.

Calvin

I am pleased because I completed the work, it was useful, and I enjoyed the experience.

Jodie

We were treated like adults. We got included in every part of the course. We have been encouraged and motivated to be the best we could be.

Rebecca

I am happy I achieved this course and stayed all the way. It was really good, I have been a part of everything.

Jordan



Broxburn Cyber Café

During 2015-16 The Broxburn Cyber Café, located on the corner of Almondell Road and Strathbrock Place has gone through a refurbishment period, thanks to the support of West Lothian Council, in particular Phyllis McFadyen, the local Housing Manager, we have upgraded the facility. The young people and staff worked together, giving the place a coat of paint, new flooring and some new furniture. The facility is now a brighter and more welcoming place to visit. The statistics below evidence a slight drop in numbers during the autumn period, when most of the work was taking place. During 2016 we have been promoting the service and new young people are now accessing the drop-ins and groups running in the building.

We have established a close working relationship with Broxburn Academy, providing 1-1 support and counselling for young people experiencing difficulties in main stream school. A number of girls have been involved in a girls self-esteem group and young people accessing the drop-ins held three times per week in the Cyber Café, have been involved in cooking groups,

music sessions, sports activities and held groupwork sessions on a number of topics affecting them, such as substance use, relationships, politics, further education and employment. The staff support and encourage the opportunity for volunteering, several young people have taken up this opportunity. This work and the groupwork programmes have provided young people with evidence for Youth Achievement Awards, which they are currently working towards. The work is very different to the formal education in school, but totally complements the learning processes and fits within the National Curriculum for Excellence.

There have been sporadic periods of Anti-Social Behaviour in the Broxburn and Uphall areas, our streetwork team and Cyber Café staff continue to engage with young people on the streets. We work closely with local police, fire officers, local Councillors and W.L. Council environment teams and Youth Service colleagues to address this behaviour. This work will continue to develop throughout 2016/17 assisted by an injection of funds secured

Statistics	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Combined
Total Attendances	75	82	65	72	74	59	40	48	30	50	83	78	756
Unique Males	22	19	23	17	17	13	10	11	9	19	27	21	72
Unique Females	11	6	6	8	9	6	3	5	3	5	14	9	29
Total Unique Attendances	33	25	29	25	26	19	13	16	12	24	41	30	101



Streetwork

Streetwork, has been a fundamental aspect of the Youth Action Project's work since the inception of the organisation in December 1992. The work involves trained youth workers who engage with young people in the areas where they choose to congregate, in park, by shops, and communal areas. We work closely with Police colleagues but our approach by the very nature that we are not enforcement Officers; is different but complimentary, working towards the same aims of Safer Communities and reduction in crime.

We carried out 518 sessions in areas throughout West Lothian during 2015/16; we complete an average of 5 shifts per week, and approximately 9-10 areas are covered on a weekly basis. This is an average; as if a specific area has been highlighted as having a particular problem with young people, a more concentrated service is delivered with a focused joint approach with colleagues and local community organisations to tackle the problems.

(These figures do not include additional sessions carried out in Blackburn funded by Community Action Blackburn)

The areas recorded as receiving the highest intensity of work from our streetwork service for 2015/16 are as follows:

Ladywell, Blackburn, Craigshill, Armadale, Uphall, Broxburn, Whitburn, Dedridge, Polbeth, Bathgate

The areas selected for service delivery are informed by evidence provided through the Community Safety Unit Analyst and the Neighbourhood Youth Officer, seconded from our team. We also welcome information regarding issues of youth disorder from community organisations, such as, Community Councils, residents groups, local Councillors and community members themselves.

As well as carrying out community safety work, the team also provides young people with advice on the risks of substance use, personal safety, bullying and many other subjects, we are also an authorised C.Card and sexual health information mobile point. The team will also make visits to young people who are deemed at risk or struggling to manage tenancies.

We often provide snacks and hot drinks to young people met on the streets, particularly in the winter. Any donations of food can also be delivered through our team to people in homeless accommodation, particularly those in B&B's.

We are always keen to hear from community members and young people themselves about issues impacting on the communities of West Lothian. Don't be afraid to contact us with information or



Summer Diversionary Activity Programme

School holidays can often present difficulties for families and communities, particularly the long summer break. With financial support provided by West Lothian's Community Safety Board, the Youth Action Project have provided over 200 young people every summer with a wide range of activities and residential opportunities.

Referrals are made from Social workers, teachers and other organisations for places on the summer programme, unfortunately we cannot always accommodate everyone but we do our best. Activities provided are swimming, ice skating, water sports, cycling (our off road trips to Glentress are always popular) and many other sports. In addition to our sporting activities, we also provide two music Academies for young people interested in learning to play an instrument write songs or sing. We accept any young person with an interest, whether a beginner or a more experienced musician. Tutorials, jam sessions and live recordings are all a part of the week long programme. At the end of these programmes, the two groups join to hold a live performance for friends and family to hear and see what they have learned. It is always a great night, full of talent and fun.

One of the highlights of the summer programme is our visits to the Isle of Skye, for several years we have been fortunate in working with Camp and Trek, an organisation that assists young people to access excursions and residential experiences that will enhance their lives. Some of our most vulnerable young people, or those that have excelled in their

work with us, are offered the opportunity to attend a residential and outdoor activity break in Skye, through the Whitewave centre based in Kilmuir. John and Ann, manage an excellent welcoming and supportive facility. A diverse programme of activities are delivered, led by qualified instructors, our staff members also join in with the young people, The activities include climbing, sea kayaking, grass boarding, gorge walking and an overnight camp. Initially it can be quite a challenge for young people, they have to overcome fears and the biggest issue these days – no mobile phone or Wi Fi signals!!

Comments from participants:-

"I enjoyed all of it! . . . The staff were brilliant; I had the best time ever. I couldn't have done most of it without the staff to be honest."

"I had a good experience, it was one of the best things I've ever done! Everything I done was new to me and aye most of it worried me but I still done it!"

"It's gorgeous up there, so much space, so quiet, but you can't always get a signal on your phone, Jordan had to go up the hill to phone his girlfriend, he was away for ages I thought he got lost, seriously the place is all hills"

On a serious note, the activities and group support provided for these young people assists in the reduction of anti-social behaviour and risk of young people getting involved in criminal behaviour. Evaluations are gathered from the young people participating in these activities and we also check with Community Police and analysts to assess if those involved have stayed out of trouble.

Addiewell

The Youth Action Project has re-established work with many agencies working in the Addiewell area this year through the Addiewell Action group, we have worked in Partnership with the Council's Youth Services and the Pitstop to develop a new Youth group held on Monday evenings. The group have made good use of the gym within the Pitstop and incorporated this work into their work around health and fitness. This is a topic that the young people attending the group asked to work on, looking at diets, sleep patterns, stress, relationships and social media, all matters affecting group members and the community at large.

Being part of the Addiewell Action group has also allowed us the opportunity to be involved with the Community Council, Gala Day Committee, Addiewell and St Thomas's Primary Schools and the Council's Regeneration Team. Local lads have been involved in building new planters for the school and by the war memorial. This work will be ongoing during the year. We aim to continue supporting the young people of Addiewell to become active citizens for their village.

Statements provided from some of the young people involved in the Addiewell work during an evaluation feedback session.

"The Youth Action Project means a great deal to me, it's a place where young people can come ask advice, talk about whatever they want and get stuff off your chest. I

think the drop in has made a lot of people come closer and help friendships happen.

Through the YAP a lot of opportunities have been made i.e. the trips during the summer, using the gym and learning about growing things in the community garden as well.

MEETING people like Alex & Jade has been amazing, you know you can say anything without being judged, criticised or anything going any further (confidentiality). Even when Alex and Jade aren't here, their co-workers are all lovely too! Even with all the idiots that come along (not going to name names like I usually would) the atmosphere is always amazing.

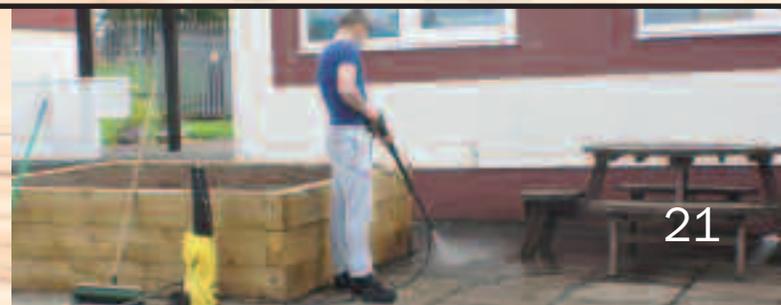
Everyone always has a good time and a good laugh. The banter is truly great. It's like we are all a family.

I think meeting Jade, Alex, Barry, Graeme, and all the other workers is a pleasure and meeting all the youths too! I feel so comfortable with almost everyone and can really be myself. Thanks for everything troops."

Brooke, 15

"The Addiewell drop in offers the children in the local community a safe place where they can openly talk about key issues that directly affect them within their daily lives.

It also offers support with issues that are also very prominent in our lives, i.e. we have in depth discussions



about drugs and alcohol awareness and what the damaging effects that it will have in regards to your mental health as well as the effects that it will do on your physical well-being.

The workers offer a key role in remaining impartial when discussing different modern world issues with close focus within political events i.e. Brexit, independence from the UK. Although we come from different backgrounds and bring our own skills to the group are helped to be the best that we can be with the role models that the staff are.

In conclusion the Addiewell drop in session is a high moment in my week as it has given me a place where no judgements will be made and all staff are respectful of whoever you are. All of the workers make everyone happy and feel comfortable.

This is the reason that funding should be granted and the drop in should be allowed to continue."

Stephen 17

"To me, the Monday club is somewhere to go to talk about stuff, have a laugh and get stuff off my chest. If I didn't go to Monday club, I would probably sit at home in my room listening to music. Thank you."

Lily 17

"The Addiewell drop in is important to me because it gives me chance to socialise with people and to help give me support for whatever I need to talk about."

Taylor 15

"The Addiewell drop in is important to me because it gives me an opportunity to socialise and get out of the house. It has helped improve my confidence."

Anon, 14

"It helped me interact with the community and kept me off the streets."

Anon, 12

"I would probably sit in my house if the club was not here. This club is good for my socialising skills and helps me interact with people."

Anon, 14

"The club is good for my social life, without it I would be lost."

James, 13

"If this club wasn't here I would probably stay in my house or go out with my mates. This club has saved me from being bored."

John, 15

"This youth club is very good fun and very good for my age."

Niamh, 12

"This club is great because I have made good friends and had fun at the days out doing new things."

Lucy 12

"This youth club is good for people around my age because it gets me out of the house."

Paisley 13



Partnerships

This is always a difficult section to report on, as the Youth Action Project is fortunate in working with many different partners and community members. On a personal level I have had new opportunities to represent the third sector in a variety of West Lothian's Strategic groups and Committee structures this year . . . With the revitalisation of the Gateway, our third sector TSI, I am confident that there are many opportunities for partnership bids to be created and successfully secured in the coming months and years. The economic climate is tough at the moment and unpredictable for future years, however, the need for joint working has never been so strong; therefore I hope to build on the continued enthusiasm to work together with statutory and third sector partners.

It has not been possible to mention all sections of our work within this report but I would like to highlight some of the positive partnerships and close working relationships that we have experienced.

Schools – We have forged excellent communication links with many of the High Schools in West Lothian; this has led to many young people who struggle with mainstream education being offered bespoke support packages or alternative groupwork programmes. I would like to pay particular reference to the quality partnership work with Suzie Young and her team at Inveralmond Community High School

and Grace Burns and colleagues at Bathgate Academy. This does not detract from our links into other schools and I have no doubt that in this time of reducing budgets and increasing pressures on students, that we will form even stronger links with all High schools throughout West Lothian and indeed our new relationships with many Primary schools.

The EEI group – This group, chaired by Fiona MacKenzie, the Council's Early and Effective Intervention Officer, continues to be a productive mechanism to ensure that appropriate supports are put in place for young people who have been involved in criminal behaviour. Given the many difficult cases discussed at these meetings it is hard to believe that the atmosphere is always upbeat and supportive, many thanks to colleagues from CYPT, YIP, Youth Justice Team, WLDAS, Burnhouse, Behavioural Support team, Police and Anne Keenan – Education Child Protection Officer, who deserves a special mention in this report for her advice and support – particularly at odd hours of the night!!!

We have also continued strong working links with the Council's Arts Services, my thanks to Len McCaffer, Fiona Low and Camille Archer for their tireless work on joint initiatives. These projects give young people opportunities that they would never normally get access to, The Luminate project was a great example, bringing together young women from the



YWCA girls group, older people from the Craigshill Good Neighbourhood Network and teenagers from our Offbeat Project, culminating in an evening of public art illuminated onto buildings throughout Craigshill. We plan to continue developing intergenerational projects in Craigshill; linking with partners in Craigsfarm, Almond Housing, Craigshill Greenspace, along with our Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision group colleagues, who continue to support our work in the Wee Croft and many others in the coming year.

The partnership work with colleagues involved in Youth Providers meetings, and Regeneration Projects continues to provide improved opportunities for young people and community members. We aim to become more active partners, supporting the Glitter Cannons LGBT group in the coming year and continue working with Youth Service colleagues to enhance learning and employment opportunities for young people through mechanisms such as the Activity Agreement Steering group.

Finally, I would like to thank the following third sector colleagues for their continued support – Brian Pringle and colleagues at WLDAS, Raymond Branton – FCDWL, Danny Holligan – Barnardos, Charlie Bryceland, Lisa Haggerty and colleagues from Community Action Blackburn, Fiona Pearson at WLSN, Douglas Westwater and colleagues at Community Enterprises, Young Carers, Circle, Signpost, Chill Out Zone, Hilda Dolan and colleagues at Craigshill YWCA, West Lothian Children’s Panel members, the staff of the Blackburn Primary Schools and their P6/7 pupils, not forgetting a big thank you to Pinewood School staff and their amazing pupils colleagues at Boghall Community Wing with whom we share many experiences including running a Community Café.

We also very much appreciate the support from West Lothian Chamber of Commerce for their donation and assistance this year.

The whole service has also benefited from the generous donations from Greggs and Tesco’s.

This is not an exhaustive list, but as you can see the Youth Action Project believes in the power of partnership working.



Staff List

Gordon Balfour – Music Co-ordinator

Karen Balfour –

Early Intervention Worker (left Feb '16)

Graeme Black – Sessional Worker

Kevin Campbell – Sessional Worker

Joe Cassidy – Project Worker

Kerry Chumbley – Project Worker

Maria Cunningham – Project Worker

Helen Davis – Project Director

Nicole Ferrier – Sessional Worker

Steven Ferry – Administration Assistant

Janet Findlay – Armadale Youth Space Co-ordinator

Angie Gourdie – INtegr8 Co-ordinator

Evelyn Hannah – Project Worker

Kerry Henderson – Neighbourhood Youth Officer

Alex Hughes – Youth Activity Co-ordinator

Stevie Jack – Sessional Worker

Viki Johnston – Sessional Worker

Louise Kerr – Sessional Project Worker

Sheila Leslie – Finance Administrator

Stephen Logue – Music Sessional Worker

Andy McCaig – Sessional Worker

Nikki McDonald – Sessional Music Worker

Richard McDade – Project Worker

Jade McGowan – Project Worker

Liam McMillan – Sessional Music Worker

Linda Paige – P/T Counsellor

Lorna Thomas – Music Sessional Worker

Barry Walker – Tooled Up Co-ordinator

Kathleen Ward – Project Worker

A big thank you to our volunteer team – too numerous to list but of equal importance to the success of the project.



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