

Annual Report

2018/19



The cycle of life...

Sharing the journey through life's transitions

Foreword

Welcome to the West Lothian Youth Action Project Annual Report for 2018/19.

WLYAP has always been a champion of young people and continues to play a crucial role in supporting other organisations in the wider community. It has been over 26 years since the YAP began from humble beginnings, here in Craigshill, to covering the wider community of West Lothian, playing a positive role in transforming lives and bringing positivity to young people.

Our achievements over the past 12 months are there for all to see. We continue to reach out to young people in times where resources are stretched. Our hard working and dedicated teams continue to provide a first class service to the community of West Lothian; our outreach services, our befrienders, supporting those who feel isolated, our street work teams who see a future in young people, our team who not only teach practical skills in our workshop, community gardens and 'Food Fridays' but give a listening ear and provide advice when needed. Our music sessions not only provide tuition on instruments, but life skills such as teamwork and discipline. All of which combine to giving young people in West Lothian the building blocks of a great future.

Despite the limited resources, YAP has continued to provide a first class service and has also played a pivotal role in the health and wellbeing of communities; from suicide awareness, mental health and counselling, to liaising with schools and supporting young people who are often lost. It has been a privilege to be a Chairperson of such a wonderful and essential service to West Lothian.'

Ryan Addison

Chairperson

Services Provided

Detached Streetwork

Early Intervention 1-1 support

Practical Skills Training (Tooled Up)

Environmental projects

Music Services

Summer Playscheme

Counselling

Befriending Service (INtegr8)

Youth Drop -ins

Youth Committee & Consultations

Targeted groupwork

Cooking sessions

This is not an exhaustive list of the services the Youth Action Project provides, we have a range of skilled staff who offer advice, information and support on many issues facing young people and communities. As well as informal education and training, young people are engaged in activities and groups to increase their opportunities, strengthen their resilience and reduce their involvement in anti-social behaviour. Where possible we create bespoke packages to suit the needs of the young people or individuals. Our work requires close working relationships to be established with Schools, Police, Fire and Rescue service, Health professionals, and many voluntary sector agencies.

Groupwork and Individual Support Statistics



Male – 5056 Female 2891

Numbers demonstrate that the Youth Action Project engages with a significantly higher number of males than females on an annual basis.

		
Age not specified	4	5
4 - 8 Years	20	26
9—12 Years	131	132
13—15 Years	191	138
16—18 Years	113	52
19—25 Years	27	9
TOTAL	486	362
Gender Neutral		5



Streetwork Statistics

Areas of West Lothian with highest number of engagements from April 2018 – March 2019

- Bathgate
- Craigshill
- Blackburn
- Broxburn/Uphall
- Whitburn

Top 5 issues addressed

- Alcohol and Drug use (31.6%) Young people witnessed or stating to staff they have consumed alcohol
- Anti-social behaviour
- School issues/ non attendance
- Health issues (Including Mental & Sexual health)
- Relationship/ family concerns



		
Up to age 10 Years	60	62
11—13 Years	519	194
14—15 Years	903	395
16—17 Years	385	84
18+ Years	237	114
TOTAL	2104	849

Life Changes Project – Care Experienced Young People

Activities		8
Arts & Crafts, Animation, Photography,		34
Music and Make Up Masterclasses	TOTAL	42

Feedback – Parents, Carers and Volunteers...

“The Playscheme helps my daughter to interact with other kids. I wouldn’t change a thing, she loved it. After attending previous years my daughter was keen to return and it also keeps her busy rather than sitting all day on her iPad. Don’t think there is anything we would change. Great club, lots of different activities for the kids. Staff all very nice and family trips are great, gives parents the chance to get to know other families in the community”.

“My son is a boy with a few problems in different areas at the moment, having someone like Alex from the Youth Action Project to validate his feelings about things and to help him accept that you can’t change what has happened in the past but you can make it better and learn from experiences. I feel the work has had more of an impact than he realises at the moment. The fact that there is someone other than his family to talk things through with is a huge benefit.”

“The Playscheme helps my children learn new skills, interact and play, they make new friends, develop social skills while having fun at the same time. My children both enjoyed the Playscheme very much. The excitement in their voices was a pleasure to hear. The staff were very good, knowledge of activities was great, friendly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all people involved. Superb job”.

Befriendees (the young people)

“Befriending gives me the chance to do stuff. It’s good to be able to talk to my befriender, even if I’ve had a bad day”.

“An outstanding service which I cannot fault. The befriender was consistent, rarely cancelled and applied a person-centred approach”.

“I can talk to anyone now”.

Befrienders (the volunteers)

“Watching the changes in some of the young people make it all worthwhile. It’s been a pleasure to be part of it all”.

“I feel like I have achieved something and also supported someone else to achieve. I loved it”.

Parent

The befriender took on board what my son liked and took an interest in what he wanted to do. The befriender went beyond what I expected, doing things my son wanted within the service when he previously used to get frustrated. My son was talked to like a grown up and came home with a spring in his step. It was the one thing he really wanted to do”.

Referrers

“The young people we refer are always more social and benefit from their befriender. They get opportunities they wouldn’t have had and become more confident in themselves. This is an excellent service and we would be lost without this resource to offer our most vulnerable young people”.

“The young people are at the heart of the project and they are listened to”.

“I like how it’s not a statutory service. I like how the young people referred are thoroughly matched and are offered a wealth of activities to choose from with their befriender”.

Satisfaction Surveys

94%

Practical Skills Training/Tooled Up

Excellent

92%

Counselling / 1-1 support

Extremely Helpful

92%

YAP Music

Excellent

Feedback – Young People...

“The most important thing YAP gave me was a sense of place and also the confidence to express myself. I would never perform in front of others but now you'd be lucky to have me be quiet. I learned more than any music degree could teach me about playing with others. Even small tricks that help you hone your abilities go a long way. Not every young person needs to know how to tune a guitar but they do deserve an environment where they can develop themselves socially”.

“The Cybercafé (based in Broxburn) helped me a lot when I was at school”.

“I got badly bullied at school; it wasn't the best time for me. I used the drop-in as my escape as I felt it was a safe place for me. Richard and the team have helped me a lot to gain confidence and realise ways that I could to get my head down and focus on school. I had left school and went to college, my visits were less often but I still kept in touch. The team helped me a lot with coming out as gay, it was one of the hardest things I have done, as I wasn't sure how my parents were going to take it.

Richard helped me a lot with how to explain the way to go about it. If people had asked me ten years ago what do you see yourself doing in the future, I wouldn't have had an answer with the bad time I had at school, but now I have overcome it all and I am enjoying my career working towards my dream job as a catering executive”.

“A massive thanks to Richard and the team for their help as I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for them”.

“During my recent visits I have realised that the drop-in does not get much funding at all now. When I look back to when I was a young person using the drop in., we used to have loads of trips, cooking and education sessions etc. I understand there are troubles getting funding for small projects, but I know from my experiences that more activities, days out and support from the staff will make a huge impact on the lifestyle of the young ones, as many don't get much at home”. “It has helped me experience new things and with many family issues, how to stay out of trouble with police and school etc and helped me to get on the right path in life”.

“Richard has helped me a lot and has never let me down if there's something wrong and If I need to talk Richard will try his best to help me fix it. The Cyber (Broxburn drop-in) has got me to trust people again. I have been attending for 7 years whenever I needed it, look back now I see how far I have come, without the place I would have been lost”.

Feedback from partner agencies who have referred young people to our services

“The Youth Action Project has continued to work with Almond Housing Association (AHA) throughout 2018/19. This longstanding partnership, based on a shared sense of supporting young people to meaningfully contribute to the local community, has seen a wide range of initiatives develop and flourish. Activities include the successful creation and management of three community gardening spaces, the creation of the Craigshill Community Fridge, art-work in Hobart Street and the refurbishment of the Riverside Community Wing”.

“In 2019 the AHA Board visited the Hobart Street Community Garden, one of the earliest community growing partnership ventures between the two organisations. The AHA Board were delighted with the site, commenting on the positive look and the wide variety of healthy looking produce the garden had on display. They were also impressed with the evidence of true community involvement, noting the brightly coloured painted rocks around the garden – the results of a successful community open day facilitated by Helen and the team”.

“AHA are proud to be able to continue to work with the Youth Action Project and look forward with enthusiasm to their next big joint venture....to be revealed in the New Year!”

Food Fridays statement from a carer supporting a young man to attend the Friday cooking sessions.

“When Mark and I first heard of the cookery class, neither of us were immediately filled with much hope. He had been in a cookery class before and lasted three weeks!”

“However, we were soooo wrong. The chefs, immediately aproned Mark and called him “chef”. Then step by step included him in every aspect of the cooking process. Cleaning surfaces, preparing vegetables, mixing, tasting, eating and taking some home for mum.....and all with smiles and laughs. Finally, clearing up....but before leaving, deciding what was going to be made the next time...their choice. All done at a pace that everyone in the class could manage”.

“The impact has been Mark now has a new skill and a new confidence, but most importantly a new group of friends that he wants to hang out with....As his carer, I have a good time too, and sometimes, I get fed!”

“Barry and Joe have helped my young person develop and practice skills that have helped towards him gaining a space on a National Progression Award at Glasgow City College. The young person has grown in confidence and has the opportunity every week to do practical activities that he enjoys. The course has a direct link to what the young person wants to achieve vocationally and is motivated by the offer of gaining the skills required to obtain a CSCS card”.

Review by Project Director

“The past year has presented our organisation with many challenges but also some great opportunities. The title of this Annual Report ‘The Cycle of Life’ reflects how our work contributes to the lives of the young people and communities that we work with. The holistic approach and wide ranging informal education and support programmes offered, raise young people’s awareness of challenges that can face them in adulthood; also building their resilience and self -confidence. Following our mission statement - Offering Young People the Chance to Advance.

Our constant battle to secure funding and suitable premises required for the delivery of programmes and individual support that we offer is frustrating, but encourages us to develop new partnerships and consistently review the needs of young people; working with them and the wider network of agencies and community groups to improve their life chances. We are acutely aware of the constraints placed upon Local Authority funds and the harsh reality of financial cuts to many services. The loss of the Alcohol Diversion fund in 2018 and a 25% + reduction in voluntary sector funding for 2019/20 has and will continue to reduce the services we deliver.

That said, it is not all bad news, we have diversified the programmes delivered to reflect the impact of poverty experienced by our most disadvantaged families and communities. Our environmental and community food projects assist young people to learn new skills in landscaping, joinery and growing edible produce, these skills are transferable and will remain with young people as they transition into adulthood. Our community fridge supported by Almond Housing Association and food project is reducing food waste and poverty. These services are breaking down age barriers and assisting young people to become more aware of wider social issues. We are also able to contribute to the wider national and local strategies addressing climate change and reducing inequalities.

Funding secured from the Lottery – Year of the Young People and Life Changes Trust has created new opportunities, as have our continued strong partnerships with many voluntary and community groups throughout West Lothian, too numerous to list

Our detached streetwork and more generic youth groups remain a priority for the organisation, with stretched resources, youth work is often not considered an essential provision, this is a very short sighted viewpoint, if we do not fully engage our young people in decision making and future planning it will be detrimental to the future of our society.



I would like to thank my staff team, volunteers, Board of Directors, partner agencies, community members and of course young people for their hard work and dedication over the past year. Our aim is to strengthen the financial position of the organisation in the coming years, diversifying funding streams and partnerships to ensure we continue to deliver high quality services to young people and the communities of West Lothian.

Helen Davis – Project Director

West Lothian Youth Action Project

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Board of Directors

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year were:

Ryan Addison
Janice Turner
Helen Wilson
Andrée Carruthers
Nichola Clark

In addition, the following individuals acted as advisors on the Board and provided support to the organisation.

Cllr. Angela Doran
Cllr. Peter Heggie
Beverley Akinlami
Jock Kerr – Honorary President

Thanks to our sponsors...

