

CHILDREN & FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL:

To understand the youth provision provided without charge and the breadth of opportunities for adolescent young people in Stockport (11-16 years).

Report of the Scrutiny Review Panel: Services to Young People**1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1. As part of the Scrutiny Work Programme approved by the Council for the municipal year 2023/24, the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee requested a scrutiny review to consider the youth provision, provided without charge and the breadth of opportunities for adolescent young people in Stockport aged 11 to 16 years old.

1.2. The specific focus of the review was agreed as:

- To understand the demographics of the adolescent population across the borough.
- To scope and map the provision available delivered via the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector and the Council.
- To understand the infrastructure and connections across the provision.
- To understand how provision is funded.
- To identify any areas that would benefit from being strengthened.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. In Autumn 2023, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published refreshed statutory guidance outlining the expectations of tier 1 local authorities in England to ensure young people's rights and needs are met regarding youth activities in the local area.

2.2. Under Section 507b of the Education Act (1996), all young people aged 13 to 19 years (and up to 25 years for those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) have the right to access youth activities which are for the improvement of their wellbeing and promote their personal and social development.

2.3. Section 507b is primarily focused on open access community-based youth provision. The local authority is not duty bound to directly provide services, however they can assist others in the provision of services and make arrangements for facilitating access to services. Local authorities may charge for services, but doing nothing due to cost, is not seen as a reasonable response to this legal duty.

- 2.4. Additional key points in the guidance include local authorities must take steps to learn about young people's views in the area along with publicising information about available provision and keeping this up to date.
- 2.5. The guidance suggests that a rich and vibrant local youth offer is likely to involve collaboration with the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE). The local offer should probably be delivered via a blend of in-house youth workers and those in the VCFSE alongside workers in allied sectors, including health, police, and schools.

3. ADOLESCENT POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS IN STOCKPORT (CENSUS 2021)

- 3.1. At the time of the 2021 Census, Stockport's population of 0–18-year-olds was 65,162, this equates to 22.1% of the total population. The population of 0–18-year-olds is split fairly even by sex, of which 33,575 (51.5%) are male and 31,587 (48.5%) are female.
- 3.2. Stockport's population of young people aged 11–16-years-old is 20,956, this equates to 7.1% of the total population. Split by sex, there is a slightly higher percentage of males aged 11–16-years-old compared to females, 10,977 (52.4%) males and 9,979 (47.6%) females.
- 3.3. By ethnic group, most young people aged 11–16-years-old split are White British or White Other (81.6%), then with 9.2% Asian or Asian British, 5.8% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, 1.9% Other ethnic groups and 1.4% Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African.
- 3.4. The disability status for 0–18-year-olds, under the Equality Act, is 92.6% not disabled, 2.8% disabled: day-to-day activities limited a lot and 4.6% disabled: day-to-day activities limited a little.

4. REVIEW METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. Two presentations to the review panel took place including a scoping report and delivering the evidence gathered on 17th of October 2023 and an update on 23rd of November 2023. Elected members involved in the Scrutiny Review panel were:
 - Councillor Janet Mobbs (Panel Chair)
 - Councillor Shan Alexander
 - Councillor Jake Austin
 - Councillor Colin Foster
 - Councillor Becky Senior
 - Councillor Dallas Jones

4.2. Officers who attended the review panels to provide their insight and experience to the panel were:

- Heidi Shaw: Director, Family Help and Integration Stockport Family
- Megan Mayhew: Strategic Participation leader
- Donna Higgins: Strategic Participation Leader
- Susan Scott: Team Manager Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support
- Amanda Aylward: Virtual School Headteacher
- Sarah Kelly: Assistant Service Lead Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support

4.3. A survey was sent out to gather information and data from representatives of the VCSFE sector regarding free youth provision offers to young people aged 11-16 years old.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. There is a broad and varied range of activities and provision on offer for young people aged 11-16 in the borough that are funded and delivered through the public and/or VCSFE sector. An example of the provision available is below, please note this is not a full and complete picture.

5.2. Local authority provision

- Stockport Youth Justice Service (YJS) and Targeted Youth Support Service provides diversionary holiday activities for young people open to the service and a comprehensive school programme delivering sessions such as knife crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and E-Safety. There were 7,008 sessions delivered to pupils across the borough during the last full academic year. The Service employed additional youth workers arising from the Council budget in 2021 and 2022.
- The RTime Detached Youth Work Team sits within the YJS, funded through positive investment funds via the YJS budget and is a local authority led team. The team consists of 3 full time and 1 part time youth workers who focus on areas where there are high levels of anti-social behaviour and high need. The sessions are mainly detached youth work focusing on diversionary activities during the evenings and school holidays.
- Stockport Council fund
 - Care Leavers Forum, supported by Pure Insight
 - Autism Ambassadors
 - Stockport Action Youth Speakers (SAYS, forum for young people with additional needs and disabilities)

- Youth Council
- SK Inc, Stockport's Children in Care Council
- L!sten, delivered by two organisations - PIE and Autisk

5.3. Stockport Homes under their foundation arm, have a member of staff who provides targeted work in schools.

5.4. HAF (Holiday activities and Food Programme) during the school holidays

- The HAF programme is funded by the DfE and seeks to offer activities and food provision to children that are eligible for income based free school meals, typically in the form of holiday club and spaces with a substantial meal. HAF runs during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays for a total of 24 days per year, with the ambition to prevent children from low-income families struggling with lack of food during the longer school holidays and to offer opportunities to get involved in enriching activities.
- Local providers apply to deliver the programme in line with the DfE set criteria [Holiday activities and food programme 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2023). Funds are allocated based on value for money in respect of cost per child per day, set against the quality of the provision being offered. Many providers are local established organisations who have existing links with the families supported.
- Funding for HAF is confirmed for the 2024/2025 financial year, with the last holiday period being Christmas 2024. At the point of writing there has been no information on plans for the 25/26 financial year. We are working with Sector 3 to support organisations to support their sustainability moving forward. Current organisations with HAF funded programmes can be seen in appendix 1.

5.5. Secondary School Provision

Secondary school websites detail many clubs and societies that are offered to their students aged 11-16 years old. The most commonly occurring are below, although it is not guaranteed that all Stockport young people would have access to all of these as the provision is a decision made by each individual school. Website addresses for secondary schools can be found in appendix 2.

- Sporting activities; football, rugby, golf, cross country, tennis, table tennis, badminton and netball alongside dodgeball, cheerleading, skittles, Zumba, futsal, chess and boccia.
- Wide ranging dance, drama and musical opportunities with lessons in classical instruments, popular music, DJ club and a ukulele club.
- A vast array of additional academic classes such as French, Spanish, Japanese, science, maths or homework clubs.

- Community and fundraising projects alongside school councils, an eco-council and upcycling club.
- Reading clubs, a Bake -Off club, craft club, Dungeons and Dragons club, debating societies, young reporters club and journalism club.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

6.1. The RTime Shout survey was used as part of this review to consult with young people, with over 50 responses back, asking what activities they enjoyed and what they would like to see more of. Young people were also consulted as part of the review from schools and a VCSFE provision survey as follows:

- Castle Hill School
- Werneth High School
- Stockport College
- 2 young people responded to a VCSFE Provision survey

One of the key findings was that young people would like to see more sports based affordable activities available to them and more after school clubs suitable and inclusive for children with SEND.

6.2. Engagement of young people is absolutely vital to the youth offer in Stockport as it is to many areas of young people's life. The Stockport Youth Alliance was set up in June 2023 for this very purpose and the organisations PIE and Autisk were awarded the contract to develop and deliver this Alliance. Young people were involved in the selection and interviewing of organisations bidding to run the Youth Alliance and also decided the ongoing name, 'L!sten'.

6.3. L!sten is growing in numbers and hosted the Youth Summit on 6th February 2024, involving high schools across the borough as well as the many networks of young people from school councils to other youth forums that exist in Stockport. Over a hundred young people's views were also captured at this event and will feed into future plans. Stockport Youth Summit on 6th February 2024.

7. FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTION OF PROVISION

7.1. The One Stockport Local Investment program recognises the pivotal role that the VCFSE sector can play in improving community outcomes. With its unique position, the VCFSE sector provides valuable insights into residents' needs, along with the expertise to support individuals facing complex challenges.

7.2. Over 50 local VCFSE providers in Stockport are dedicated to supporting children and families across various life stages, from early years to young adulthood. In the past year,

Stockport Council has bolstered the local support offer through six grant rounds, strategically aligning priorities to create an all-age approach. These grants have funded innovative Child and Youth Programs that address anti-poverty initiatives.

- 7.3. Notably, the Marple Youth Project and Cherry Tree Youth have received investments to offer budget-friendly cooking programmes for families and provide a warm space for young people during the winter months. Additionally, the Household Support Fund (HSF) program has been transformative, channelling resources to local providers who contribute significantly to positive outcomes for children and families.
- 7.4. RTime is a network of voluntary youth providers in Stockport that work together to share expertise and resources. A recent lottery award and funding through GM Standing Together will enable RTime to hire a dedicated funding officer. This strategic move further strengthens the commitment to supporting these essential providers and ultimately improving the offer for young people across Stockport. RTime was funded via the national lottery from April 2023 for 3 years, focusing on the development of the youth work network. Through the RTime network lottery fund, there will be extra funding for Stockport College, who have agreed to deliver a Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work from 2023-24 academic year.
- 7.5. RTime are developing an interactive map of youth services in Stockport. This will link into the broader digital directory for Stockport that is being developed as part of the Neighbourhoods and Prevention Programme, for broader communication. Please see the progress of the interactive map to date [via this link](#).

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1. There is a broad offer of youth provision for young people aged 11-16 years old in Stockport that can be accessed without charge, delivered via the local authority, schools and the VCSFE sector.
- 8.2. There are emerging and developing networks across and between organisations, including RTime and these along with L!sten, the Youth Alliance, are vital elements of a strong infrastructure for the future of youth provision.
- 8.3. There is resource and support to the VCFSE sector to secure ongoing funding for youth activity in the borough, that is shaped and developed by young people's engagement and feedback. This includes a dedicated role based within Sector 3 supporting the development of the VCFSE sector into Family Hubs.
- 8.4. There are a number of areas of strength that have been identified through this review, such as:
 - Networks are growing, being utilised as a place to share information and identify joint funding opportunities.
 - Relationships across the sector and public services are continuing to develop and grow.

- Young people who attend groups report feeling safe and able to be themselves.
- There are provisions that are inclusive to young people with additional needs and specific protected characteristics.
- L!sten, Stockport's Youth Alliance is developing and providing a space for young people to share their experiences and understand their needs.

8.5. There are also a number of areas that would benefit from improvement, such as:

- An 'overarching approach' needs to be strengthened going forward to improve access for all young people.
- Members were impressed with the youth services mapping and the improvements to accessibility, but there was scope for a wider strategy to communicate more effectively the services to residents.
- It was suggested that the mapping of provision onto a google platform via the RTime network, could be linked into existing technical and digital platforms operated by the local authority for wider accessibility.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1.** Support the Council's Digital programme in the development of a single directory solution for the borough, bringing in the existing RTime mapping of activity and streamlining the recording of groups and activity across our wider programmes, such as HAF, Family Hubs, Leaving Care Local Offer and SEND Local Offer. This work will mean less duplication of effort across the system for both the service and groups. As part of this work there will be an opportunity to identify where more provision is potentially needed.
- 9.2.** Develop a wider communication strategy to improve communication to residents regarding the youth provision in Stockport. This will be a key feature of the Neighbourhoods and Prevention programme bringing services closer to where young people live, learn and play.
- 9.3.** Ensure there is a robust and widespread cross section of young people's voices fed into the youth provision offer in the borough on a sustained basis. Working with L!sten to guide and inform this engagement.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- There are none.
- Anyone requiring further information should contact Heidi Shaw on telephone number Tel: 07800 618 320 or alternatively email Heidi.shaw@stockport.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Examples of known youth providers (not exhaustive)

- RTime
- PIE
- Make a Difference
- Autisk
- Cherry Tree Project
- BYouth
- Groundwork Trust
- Re:dish
- Proud Trust
- Marple Youth Club
- CeraCycloan
- Startpoint
- Stockport County Foundation Trust
- Stockport County Community
- Skylight
- EAICO
- Ebony and Ivory
- Life Leisure

Organisations with HAF funded programmes

- Skylight (Bridgehall)
- Marple Youth Project (Marple)
- The Cherry Tree Project (Romiley)
- Stockport County Community Trust Easter provision
- RTime network at different locations – (teens) Lancashire Hill, Edgeley, Brinnington, Swythamley, Mottram Towers, Offerton, Bridgehall, Town Centre and Hollywood Towers)
- Ebony and Ivory Community Organisation – aged 5-16 (Town Centre)
- ESC Schools – aged 4-16 (Cheadle and Woodley)
- Heaton Norris Community Centre – aged 4-16 (Heatons)
- PIE – aged 5-16 (Marple)
- Progressive Sports – aged 5-16 (Reddish)
- Starting Point Community Learning Partnership– aged 7-16 (Woodley)
- Autisk (Adswood) (SEND specific)
- Progressive Sports (Heatons School students only) (SEND specific)
- Culture Bridge aged 5-16 – aimed at those currently residing in Britannia Hotel and Bredbury Hall

APPENDIX 2

Stockport LA Secondary Schools

School	Website
Bramhall High School	https://www.bhsweb.co.uk/
Castle Hill High School	https://www.castlehill.stockport.sch.uk/
Cheadle Hulme High School	https://www.chhs.org.uk/
Harrytown Catholic High School	https://www.harrytownschool.org/
Hazel Grove High School	https://www.hazelgrovehigh.co.uk/
Heaton School	https://www.heaton.stockport.sch.uk/
Highfields College	https://www.highfieldscollege.org.uk/
Laurus Cheadle Hulme	https://www.lauruscheadlehulme.org.uk/
Marple Hall School	https://www.marplehall.stockport.sch.uk/
Moat House School	https://www.moathouse.stockport.sch.uk/
Pendlebury Centre	https://pendlebury.stockport.sch.uk/
Priestnall School	https://www.priestnallschool.org.uk/
St. Anne's RC Voluntary Academy	https://www.stannes.academy/
St. James' Catholic High School	https://www.stjamescheadle.co.uk/
Stockport Academy	https://www.stockport-academy.org/
Stockport School	https://stockportschool.net/
The Kingsway School	https://thekingswayschool.com/
Werneth School	https://wernethschool.com/
Windlehurst School	https://www.windlehurst.stockport.sch.uk/home