

# *myplace*

## Case Study Report



It's really good and it's like joining another family, a closer family, we can tell each other what we think, we don't get judged.

I used to be quite nervous before I came here, so it's boosted my confidence quite a lot to make friends and meet people.

My Silver arts Award!

The Arts Award has given me a little head start at sixth form, jobs and university.

# *myplace* case study report

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The case study centres are Culture Fusion in Bradford; CRMZ in Halton; Pegasus Theatre in Oxford; Youth Campus in Stoke on Trent; TAB Centre Plus in Enfield; Custom House in Middlesbrough; Blackburn Youth Zone in Blackburn with Darwen; Parkfield in Torbay; OPEN in Norwich; Fairplay and DCAS in Chesterfield.

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## Learning the lessons from *myplace*



### This Report

This report contains evidence and learning from ten *myplace* case studies. It is intended to provide *myplace* centres, and funders and policy makers with useful examples of practice from the programme and to support sharing of best practice across the youth sector as a whole. For the full evaluation report see <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/research/children-and-young-people/learning-from-myplace>

### *myplace*

The *myplace* programme has provided approximately £240m in capital grants for the development of new and improved youth centres in England. The programme was delivered by the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). Sixty three grants have been awarded to projects which have been developed in partnership across the public and voluntary and community sectors (and in a minority of cases also with private sector investors) working with young people to develop centres which aim to meet the needs of young people in a financially sustainable way.

The centres provide opportunities for young people to participate in positive

leisure time activities and to access a variety of support services, including information, advice and guidance. The majority of provision is open access, although some grants were awarded to organisations working with specific groups of young people, such as those with disabilities, or those experiencing homelessness. Further information about the programme is available at <http://education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/b00213818/myplace->

The programme provides learning across six themes covered in this report: **developing capital projects; involving young people in decision making; delivering positive activities; delivering support services; working in partnership; revenue funding.** The report draws on the experiences of ten case study centres<sup>1</sup> and for each theme sets out what activities have taken place, the impact they have had and the lessons learnt.

### Developing capital projects

The centres were developed in response to the need for new and improved facilities for young people. Needs were identified through extensive consultation and young people were centrally involved in project development and in the design of buildings. This has ensured that centres are appealing to young people. Partnership working was a condition of successful applications, and has typified project development. Architects had an important role, and those that were able to work effectively with young people were valued by projects. Balancing the

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<sup>1</sup> The 10 case study centres are Culture Fusion in Bradford; CRMZ in Halton; Pegasus Theatre in Oxford; Youth Campus in Stoke on Trent; TAB Centre Plus in Enfield; Custom House in Middlesbrough; Blackburn Youth Zone in Blackburn with Darwen; Parkfield in Torbay; OPEN in Norwich; Fairplay and DCAS in Chesterfield.

aspirations and priorities of young people with flexible space and facilities that can be used for commercial activities was important in enabling projects to generate income and promote sustainability.

### **Involving young people in decision making**

The projects have implemented different strategies to involve young people in decision making, including those where there is informal discussion around the planning of activities and those where there is formal representation of young people at board or trustee level. Providing a range of opportunities for young people to participate in decision making a variety of ways is helpful in ensuring that young people's views are represented across all aspects of provision, although it is also important that young people are supported in decision making and have access to time and expertise of staff.

### **Delivering positive activities**

The centres offer a wide range of activities, with a particular focus on sports and arts and social events. Young people value flexibility and diversity in activities, and it is important for centres to be able to respond quickly to young people's requests for new, or different, activities (within the overall constraints of the buildings and facilities). Although centre opening times are generally extensive, it is also important that centres are able to change opening times in the context of other factors such as school opening hours, or the availability of other facilities in the area.

### **Delivering support services**

Providing access to support services in environments in which young people feel comfortable is a central aspect of the programme. Youth workers offer informal advice and guidance to young people and provide a vital signposting role. In centres

where support services are located on site, this can increase access for young people and help service providers to co-ordinate services, with the potential for improved outcomes for young people.

### **Working in partnership**

Partnership working is central to the programme and all **myplace** centres are working in partnership to deliver activities and services to young people. There is widespread collaboration between agencies in the public and voluntary and community sectors and a minority of centres have successfully engaged private sector sponsors. Partnership working offers the opportunity for service improvements and efficiencies (from improved referral processes and increased opportunities for young people), and the potential for generating funding.

### **Revenue funding**

**myplace** is a capital programme and the ability of the **myplace** centres to generate revenue funding is crucial to their long term sustainability. The centres have employed a range of strategies to generate revenue funding, which are dependent on local priorities and circumstances, and the opportunities offered by the buildings to pursue commercial activities. Some centres are dependent on public sector funding, whilst others have developed a strong commercial profile or engaged local businesses in sponsorship. A diverse funding portfolio is a long term aim for all centres and the case studies highlight the need for long term business planning, to have resources and expertise in place, and the importance of working in partnerships and marketing buildings and facilities.

# Developing capital projects

## Background

In the case study areas, project proposals had been developed on the basis of evidence of the need to renovate or replace existing buildings which were run down, or unfit for purpose. Local consultations have been important in capturing the needs and priorities of young people in the project planning stages.

In Torbay a survey was completed by 3000 young people, expressing what they would like in the area. Although there was a well-resourced youth service in Torbay, evidence from questionnaires completed by young people highlighted a lack of places to go and not enough to do. There were also issues with existing youth provision being delivered in poor quality premises.

Other methods employed to involve young people at the planning stages included planning for real exercises carried out by young people who trained as peer researchers in Stoke on Trent, and consultation events in local schools and sports events in Middlesbrough.

The **myplace** programme offered an opportunity in some case study areas to progress plans which had been in development for some time. At the Pegasus Theatre in Oxford, CRMZ in Halton and TAB Centre in Enfield, plans to develop buildings were already in place when the **myplace** programme came along and substantial amounts of funding had already been raised.



**myplace** grants made up shortfalls in the projects' overall budgets to enable building work to commence.

The buildings in which **myplace** centres have been developed included both new builds and refurbished existing centres, and in many cases young people have chosen to redevelop iconic and heritage buildings as youth centres.

Young people have been centrally involved at the design stages of projects and have led decision making on aspects such as the colour schemes, the layout of buildings, fixtures and fittings, and open and outdoor spaces. This has involved smaller groups of young people, whose involvement has been intensive. In Blackburn with Darwen, for instance, a young people's development group, consisting of 15 young people, was supported by a participation worker to be involved in the capital project. The group met regularly and attended residential sessions, which helped to develop relationships with project staff and the architect.

**'Young people were centrally involved in the design. We chose the architectural firm because they were not telling us the sort of building we should have but listening to us about the sort of building we knew we wanted. They were on board with consultation and involving young people in the design process'. (staff interview)**

The involvement of architects that were sympathetic to the aims of **myplace** was critical. Architects were selected particularly for their abilities to work creatively and effectively with young people.

Fairplay engaged the services of an architect before securing the **myplace** funding, and was explicit in the need for support to get planning approval and that payment of the architect's fees was subject to securing funding. Once funding had been secured, the architect helped with the design of the building. He met the young people at Fairplay and was able to engage with them effectively.

The whole team got involved in the practical aspects of the building from the outset. The architect spent some time at the project and met young people and he took the time to discuss the design with them. He also had prior experience of meeting similar specifications such as wheelchair access, automatic door locking systems etc.

The time spent by the architect with the young people was important, according to a number of parents, as it encouraged a sense of 'ownership' and young people 'think it's their place'.

## Impact

The approaches undertaken by the centres to developing the capital projects have impacted in a number of ways:

- The involvement of young people in project planning and development has had an important influence on the **myplace** buildings. Responding to local needs in the context of the programme's aim to develop 'world class youth facilities' has led to a portfolio of buildings which are appealing to young people.



*This is the youth centre that we attend... just looked great.*

- Facilities which provide young people with safe and welcoming places to go, and which encourage them not to be out on the streets, are key to attracting young people to the centres. Young people interviewed at the OPEN centre in Norwich explained that previously they had been "hanging around on the streets causing trouble", "cold and wet" and that the centre was



valued as a place to be able to sit down in the warmth.

- At the Tab centre in Enfield, staff at the centre reported that it helps with the perception of young people in the local community as there are less young people 'hanging around':

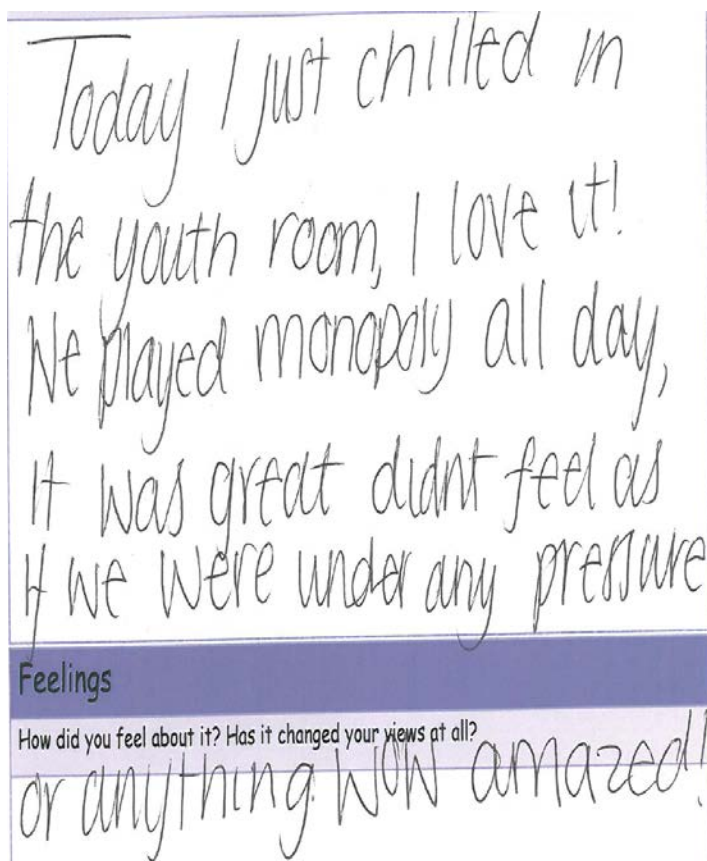
**"Talking to some of the other workers they say they see the young people kind of around when youth café's not on and they're hanging around the area and they're on their bikes 'cause there isn't anywhere to go. I don't think we necessarily have young people who would get into trouble - but you know rather than them being on the streets and being a bit of a nuisance"**

*(Staff interview)*

- Young people like the upbeat, colourful decor of centres. Space which provides the opportunity for some peace and quiet, or to socialise in an informal setting, is particularly appreciated by young people.

**'I like the sensory room where you can calm down when you feel stressed'**

*(Young person interview)*



- The **myplace** centres need to both meet the needs of young people and also to generate income (possibly through commercial activities) and these priorities have needed to be considered early in project development. At the CRMZ centre in Halton, the building was designed to be used flexibly when young people are not there. Conference facilities are offered during the daytime and the building can be closed down on one side so that these activities do not impact on the facilities for young people.

- Engaging a range of partners early in the process has been crucial in thinking about these issues. At DCAS youth workers met with the architect every two months to discuss building plans. But some of the case study centres encountered issues with the layout and functionality of the buildings. Problems included lack of space for commercial activities, lack of sporting facilities, lack of space to meet the needs of specific groups of young people, unsuitable fixtures and fittings, and problems ensuring safety when buildings do not offer flexible space which can be opened up, or closed down, according to use and staffing levels.



### Lessons learnt

The lessons learnt in relation to the development of these capital projects stress the importance of widespread consultation, and balancing the needs and expectations of young people with concerns around sustainability and capacity to generate revenue income:

- Consultation should include young people, youth workers and other potential users (including service

providers and paying customers) to ensure that buildings can meet the needs of all. Long term sustainability, viability and alternative use needs careful consideration at design and planning stage to ensure buildings are able to adapt and be flexible to changing future circumstances.

- Providing relaxing spaces for young people is important and some centres also considered that a central location for the centre was necessary for access, but also in providing a neutral and safe territory where young people from different communities could come together. This was the case at the Blackburn Youth Zone in Blackburn with Darwen, at Middlesbrough Custom House, and at the TAB centre in Enfield.

Visit Number

**Experiences**  
What did you do at Parkfield today?

We Have all been  
in the youth room  
on the Dance mats.

**Feelings**  
How did you feel about it? Has it changed your views at all?

like How they have  
a room where the  
Youths get to choose  
to do whatever.

Continue on the back of this page if you need to

# Involving young people in decision making

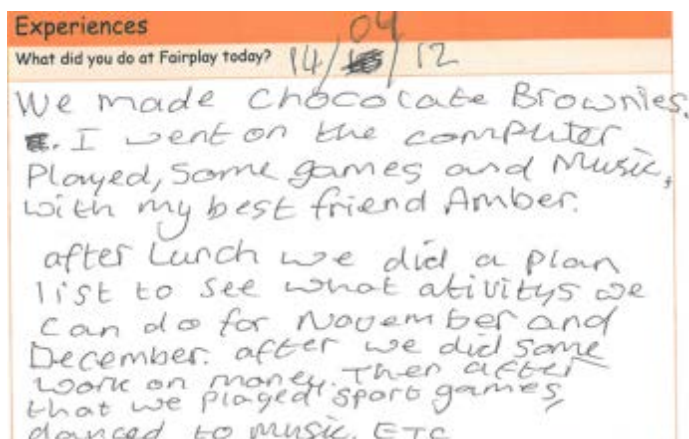
## Background

Involving young people in decision making is fundamental to youth-led provision and evidence from the impact evaluation of this programme suggests that young people involved in decision making at **myplace** centres achieve better outcomes. Centres have adopted different strategies to achieve this. All the centres involved young people in informal discussions around the planning of activities.

At the DCAS centre in Chesterfield, for instance, there is emphasis on on-going consultation. Young people are given the opportunity to decide how the sessions should be run. At the beginning of each term young people are involved in planning in relation to the delivery of drama and music sessions and in making decisions about the sessions that they will be involved in. As a result *'DCAS offers activities that people want to do rather than putting something on in the hope that a young person will do it'* (young person interview). Additional consultation with young people takes place during activity sessions: *'They always consult us, like ask us what we want to do'* (young person interview); *'a lot of the consultation we have with young people is done during the session times ... everything that young people say to us is taken into account, any ideas they have we write it all down and any concerns they have we voice these straight away to our manager'* (staff interview).

At Fairplay in Chesterfield, a Youth Forum, Vocal Point, is held monthly which consists of young people, all with a learning disability, that use centre. The group highlights what is

needed, if any improvements could be made and if there is anything in particular that they would like Fairplay to find funding for, 'everyone can contribute' (young person – member of Vocal Point).



Centres also make extensive use of social media for engaging with young people, and as a vehicle for gathering their views on activities. The Blackburn Youth Zone uses a website, facebook, twitter and chatter, to engage with young people. Photographs of each session are taken and uploaded to social media sites and young people and staff use them as a basis for dialogue about the events and about priorities for future activities.

Some centres have also developed structures to involve young people in decision making. The Parkfield centre in Torbay has developed a Youth Management Board which is involved in decision making on all aspects of provision and which is a mechanism for feeding the views of young people into the formal Parkfield Board meetings. The recruitment process to the Youth Management Board is open, and interest is generated through flyers and talking to young people. A media project was also undertaken for those using the skate park and BMX track to ensure they were able to contribute. A series of training sessions

have been implemented to help young people understand their role on the Youth Management Board.

**"I love it I don't want it to stop", we have two more weeks left and then we need to attend a meeting. On the course we are the youth workers for the kids"** (Young person interview)

Representatives from the Youth Management Board have a ten minute slot at Parkfield Board meetings. A red card system is used by young people (and adults) - red cards can be held up if young people think the Board is *'going on too much and waffle'* (young person interview), or if adults are using acronyms and language that the young people don't understand. Similarly adults can hold up their card if the young people use language that is not familiar to them.

I took this photo because Gemma (youth worker) is always there for us and helps us with tricky situations and also like management board.



The case studies have highlighted the importance of supporting young people to be involved in decision making. At the Pegasus Theatre in Oxford, for instance, two young people sit on the Board of Trustees and have full voting rights. There is also an open access Members Committee where young people's views are sought and information exchanged. Young people sit on the recruitment board for all key staff, are involved in marketing and programming shows coming to the venue. They also do a magazine called 'Generation Pegasus' once a year. Young people work in partnership with staff and trustees. An adult trustee has responsibility for young people and governance and enabling young people to draw on the experience and expertise of staff was important in helping them generate new ideas:

**'We did a big thing with the board and staff and the young people about would they like to make all the decisions about what we do in the projects ..... and actually the majority said no, they wanted to have our experience ..... and as long as we are not telling them what they think about it, or how to think about it, or how to create, then that works'** (Staff interview)



## Impact

There are benefits for both young people and centres when young people are involved in decision making:

- Involving young people in decision impacts positively on the young people involved and on their ownership of the centres. Young people valued the opportunities to influence activities at centres and were keen to be involved. They gained communication and social skills, as well as leadership, planning and organisation skills and many said that their confidence and self-esteem had improved as a result.

**We actually have input with Members Committee... its productive as well, we organised most of take over day and it's actually happening.** *(Young person, focus group)*

**'It actually makes me feel that I'm being listened to because some people don't listen to people who have got disabilities'.** *(Young person, interview)*

Jody and Kelly are members of the Youth Management Board at Parkfield.

They have completed a training course to enable them to understand their role as Board Members. Both girls reported this as a positive experience

*"It helps us the way they do things round here, how they do the committees and everything".*

*"When we go up to our A levels it will be good for us to know these things".*

Jody explained how she had changed since attending Parkfield.

*"I have grown up I used to be really immature and stupid I never used to talk to anyone, I didn't have any confidence but since I've been coming here I've been talking to youth workers and talking to people like you, I've been doing meetings and met loads of new people which completely changed me for good and not for bad".*

- Involving young people in decision making also increased the sense of ownership of the centres expressed by young people.

**They really try as hard as they can to make it youth orientated. They ask us about specific things that we want, we organise our own events. It makes you think that it's your own** *(Young person, focus group)*

## Lessons learnt

The lessons to emerge from these experiences include:

- It is important to allocate time and resources to developing and maintaining young people's participation and to providing a range of opportunities to engage, including informal discussions at activity sessions, as well structures such as committees and youth boards, through to representation of formal management and trustee structures.

**"It's really good and it's like joining another family, a**

**closer family, we can tell each other what we think, we don't get judged"** (*Young person interview*)

- It is important also to develop effective participation structures, which may include facilitation by trained and qualified youth workers. Clear terms of reference are vital, including articulation of who should be involved, and at what level, and expectations around how centres will respond to young people's views. These issues should be discussed with young people before structures are developed, as in Parkfield for instance, where youth workers worked with young people for six months to develop the Youth Management Board.
- Centres have also realised that thought needs to be given to succession, and how young people's views will continue to be represented when those currently involved move on. In Bradford, the Culture Fusion centre is beginning to explore the potential of increasing young people's involvement in governance and decision making. A group of young people had been advisors in the development stages of the project but many of these had now moved on:

**"We had anticipated the Culture Fusion Advisors group becoming more of a governors group when we were open, so then people who were in the steering group before [could be part of it]. There are different views on this because the Culture Fusion Advisors**

**don't really use the building, so if they're not using the building are they the right people to be governing the building? or should the people governing the building be the same people who are using it, who are service users? We've gone down that route more and are looking at developing the people from our existing programmes who are here on a day to day basis to become the governing body of the future"** (*Staff interview*)

- Centres were keen to ensure young people had voice but it is critical to ascertain at what level this is appropriate and effective. Not all young people want to be involved in formal participation structures but they may still want an opportunity to have influence.

Blackburn Youth Zone emphasises on-going discussion and regular consultation groups. Young people are encouraged to believe that by voicing an opinion they can make a change - *'It's important to talk to people, at the end of the day young people come here for fun'* (Staff interview) - although managing expectations is also important *"We need to be realistic and honest. We are not saying no, but we might need to offer alternative solutions"* (Staff interview).

## Delivering positive activities

### Background

**myplace** aims to deliver provide positive out of school activities to young people, with a view to building their social, emotional and practical skills and discouraging them from engaging in anti-social and risky behaviours.

**"A lot of people act differently, it's another home, you just do whatever you want"** *(Young person interview)*



It suite is great because were alot intere ad aoud on anything we want.

Centres offer a wide range of activities, including creative arts and media, sports facilities, education and training. Variety is important, and centres have offered young people opportunities to try new activities through taster sessions, and drop in. There are also specific structured activities such as team sports, dance classes, climbing wall, music and multi-media workshops, and drama groups.

**"There are lots of opportunities, lots of things going on, it can be anything from cook and eat to dance sessions, to music sessions, to DJing, to climbing, to just chilling. There's lots of variety that can be offered within a session because they're all running at the same time, which is great"** *(Staff interview)*



I took this photo because art is important at Parkfield, and anyone can get involved.



has improved their confidence and self-esteem.

**‘When I first started going I was very timid and I was scared to do different things and since I’ve been there it’s completely normal to be up on the stage and do different things. I try everything now, I don’t just sort of stay in my comfort zone’.**

*(Young person interview)*

Fairplay in Chesterfield provides an accessible facility and a diverse array of activities which get young people with disabilities and additional needs out of their homes and partaking in activities which overcome boredom and promote independence. Young people made the following comments: *‘I want to do something new, it’s boring at home,’ ‘It gives me something to do and it also helps me with my independence skills, being able to do things on my own,’ ‘It keeps you busy and makes you feel confident,’ and ‘It gets you out of the house’.* Of the activities and services offered, young people were unanimous in saying that they felt good about trying something new and the opportunities for trying different things allowed them to realise their preferences, *‘It’s made me change what I like.....I’ve realised what I can do’.*

## Impact

The provision of a wide range of activities has positive impacts for young people:

- These activities have provided young people with new social opportunities, and the chance to try out new activities and develop new skills. Young people say that this

**‘I used to be quite nervous before I came here, so it’s boosted my confidence quite a lot to make friends and meet people’.** *(Young person interview)*



- Young people have also developed skills which can help them in the future, particularly in relation to education or employment. Examples are provided by the TAB centre in Enfield and the DCAS centre in Chesterfield.

**" I used to run a music programme because we have a studio downstairs and he [young person] used to come along and then he brought his friends and did a project together and they came out with their own track, a CD of their music, and it was really positive. They came out with a really good track, and they were really impressed, their self-esteems were raised as well. In the future they can go to another place and say 'hey, this is what we can do, is there anything we can do with what we've got?', which is good, it's really good"** (Staff interview)

At DACS young people can develop their skills, confidence, and learn about different genres, including music, theatre, drama and art. As one young person commented, *'It's a really good place, it helps and develops you....helps with learning'* and another stated, *'I expect to learn something, new types of drama, widen what I already know'*. As well as gaining practical skills through performance, young people have developed their personal and social skills through communication with staff and making new friends. Several young people talked about undertaking their Silver and then Gold Arts Award.

A number of young people volunteer as part of the Award.

Amy's volunteering work at DCAS forms a basis for her gold Arts Award. She enjoys supporting younger people with the skills she has acquired. She has already taught improvisation skills through workshops, which have gone very well. Katy is another young person who has been supported through her Bronze and Silver Arts Award by the DCAS Youth Workers, and she is currently volunteering at DCAS as part of her Arts Award to enhance her CV:

**It's pretty important, it looks really good on your CV.....The Gold one gives you UCAS points as well...we've done the bronze and the silver, so we're just going to do our gold.....It will just edge me ahead of everyone else'**. (Young person interview)



- Centres have also encouraged entrepreneurship. At Parkfield in Torbay, which includes a BMX track, a young person aged 15 identified a need for helmet and pad hire. Supported by a youth worker he wrote a bid and applied to the Opportunities Fund Grant to set up a repair shop. The shop now runs every Saturday. In Stoke on Trent, a young person who had formally run a gardening business was supported by the centre to apply for a Princes Trust grant to develop an outdoor area with

seating and a barbecue for young people to use.

*being a parent of a child with a disability'*



- The centres were also supporting parents and families. In Chesterfield, for instance, the service provided by Fairplay makes a difference to parents: *'you know your child is going somewhere safe, where you've got qualified people who know what the problems and issues are with a child with a disability. It makes a huge difference knowing they are going to do something constructive, something fun and something that's not patronising like we'll send them to the day Centre kind of thing. It has a huge impact on the entire family because in the school holidays the other kids then get a chance to spend time with the parents, which is really important'*. There are social benefits for parents too, for example, by attending coffee mornings. Parents also have the opportunity to talk to people going through similar experiences with their child *'It is a very isolating role*

## Lessons learnt

The lessons learnt in this theme emphasise the importance of providing young people with opportunities to access a range of activities, and for flexibility in delivery:

- Sports, arts and social activities are particularly valued by young people, and providing young people with the opportunity to 'dip in and out' of different activities can be important in ensuring that young people do not disengage from provision if they do not like particular activities. This can be balanced with activities which build skills and encourage longer term engagement.

The Blackburn Youth Zone, for instance, provides up to 25 activities at each of its open sessions, and also encourages young people to engage in team sports and coaching activities to build a sense of belonging to the Youth Zone and to continue to develop new skills which encourage young people to attend for longer than they might otherwise have done. In Oxford, the Pegasus Theatre works with children and young people from the ages of five years upwards and many stay with the Theatre into young adulthood. The opportunity for young people to participate in a range of arts based activities, and to progress their skills in performance and production ensures that young people can continue to benefit from attending the centre.

## Delivering support services

### Background

**myplace** is also aimed at providing young people with access to a range of support services, including information, advice and guidance, in environments in which they feel comfortable.



The centres' approaches differ, with some providing a comprehensive range of services on-site and others focused on informal advice and signposting. In the Culture Fusion centre in Bradford, Custom House in Middlesbrough and the CRMZ in Halton, a wide range of support services are delivered under one roof, and the centres are operating as a 'one-stop shops' for services for young people in these Boroughs.

**In addition to daytime provision we have got a number of agencies offering youth justice and substance misuse, youth advocacy and support where young people can attend specialist provision of various kind,**

**one to one interviews, advice and guidance on particular issues by appointment.** *(Staff interview)*

In these centres co-location of services is important in enabling young people to access arrange of services in a neutral venue, and avoiding stigmatisation. Custom House staff in Middlesbrough report that the "major difference" between **myplace** and other youth provision is the support on offer: Custom House provides specialist support, treatment and 'diversionary' activities all in one place. There is also no stigma attached to the centre as young people don't know what services other young people are accessing when they walked in the door.

The co-location of services and the readily available supply of information and leaflets are valued by young people attending the CRMZ centre in Halton:

**'Because there are so many different organisations in one building its quite easy to be signposted to the right place and everyone knows everyone and you know what work they are doing, and there are plenty of posters and leaflets.'** *(Young person interview).*

Other centres are not providing services on site. In Blackburn with Darwen, for instance, there are no services housed in the Blackburn Youth Zone but the centre has close links with a local health centre offering services to young people and providers are 'invited in' to deliver specific sessions in response to the needs of young people.

In this centre, and others in which there are fewer on-site services, the role of youth workers is crucial in providing informal guidance, and signposting to other services. Often, youth workers have a different relationship with young people to that experienced with teachers or other service professionals and this can be important in encouraging young people to access support. At the Blackburn Youth Zone a high staff/volunteer to young person ratio is maintained so that staff can engage with young people and talk to them and are able to identify issues that emerge. Initially, young people are encouraged to discuss issues with staff, many of whom have counselling and support experience. Young people are then signposted and referred to other services if needed. *'Young people, particularly the most marginalised, struggle to cope with the diversity of relationships (involved in access to multiple services) we avoid all that as much as we can'* (Staff interview).

Young people at OPEN in Norwich reported they had talked to staff members and felt they were helpful and supportive.

**"I was able to unload everything and felt better afterwards" "you can unload even if you have just had a bad day"** (Young person interview)

They also reported that they would heed the advice of a youth worker over and above that of their teacher or parents.

The provision of alternative curriculum projects, or services which support young people to engage with school is an important aspect of provision. An example is the PULSE project at Parkfield.

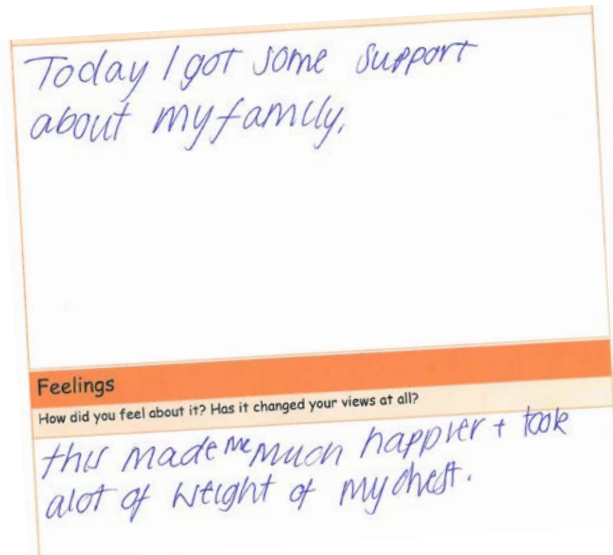
PULSE (Under 16 Learning Support and Education) at Parkfield provides services for those pupils in danger of exclusion from school, or those who are being bullied or are school phobic. A pilot project has been running about a year for pupils in Y7, Y8 and Y9. Sessions run on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, each with a maximum of 15 pupils and involve curriculum based learning followed by activities. PULSE fills the gap between mainstream school and a pupil referral unit and Parkfield provides a neutral and accessible venue for project, with access to high quality facilities.

## Impact

Linking service access to positive activities has impacts for young people and service providers:

- Young people find it easier to access services and there are more opportunities for services to engage with young people, particularly when support services are located in **myplace** buildings.





- Staff delivering services suggested that location of services within **myplace** buildings helped them to reach more young people and to engage with young people who might not normally be involved with their services. This can be particularly valuable for services such as sexual health, and in Stoke on Trent and Torbay health workers had increased contact with young people as a result of their location in **myplace** centres. For instance a sexual health worker at the Parkfield centre in Torbay reported that the centre provided a venue where a drop in could be held. "It's a great opportunity to have a youth centre to deliver services in". As a result the service was reaching more young people in the local area than it had done previously. The worker is also able to reach a different group of young people such as BMX riders and skateboard track users; groups that do not ordinarily engage with the service.

In Bradford the location of a wide range of services in the Culture Fusion centres is leading to service efficiencies because there is less need for service providers to travel to other venues. For the Early Intervention in Psychosis service the move to Culture Fusion had positive financial impacts because

workers are now able to see service users in their place of work. Limitations arising from insurance policies at other buildings had meant that this had not previously been possible.

**"[now we are here] we can see people at the same place that we work, which is much more economical...it makes our service somewhat more efficient"** (Partner agency interview)

Importantly staff also felt that the range of facilities located in Culture Fusion meant that young people with mental health problems were less likely to associate with the label of being a 'patient':

**"Our service users get to come to a place which is very youth orientated rather than mental health orientated. It's about creating opportunities for people to be young and to do young things rather than necessarily having to come to a mental health resource centre where people begin to develop an identity of being a patient"** (Partner agency interview)

- The location of services in **myplace** building has also had positive impacts on referral practices, as noted by partner agency staff interviewed at the CRMZ rooms in Halton:

**"Because the services are integrated we know a lot more about what other**

services do so you are more confident in referring them. It gives more confidence in what other services do; you know each other better, you seem them everyday" (Partner agency interview).

- The emphasis on supporting young people through alternative curriculum and transition programmes can contribute to improved attitudes to education, and act as a stepping stone to other provision.

Christopher undertakes Alternative Education (which is accredited) at DCAS, without which he wouldn't be doing anything, 'I was just at home. I hadn't been to school for a while'. He left school having only had bad experiences of learning until he started using the virtual classroom every day at DCAS. Alternative Education 'has opened my view on learning a lot, that it can be interesting, it can be fun'.

The one year experience at DCAS has given him direction; he knows what career he wants to pursue and that involves going to college before seeking a job in film, 'I know exactly what I want to do and when I want to do it'. A year ago he hadn't set his goals, 'I didn't have my goal set for college, I didn't know I was going to go to college, I didn't know I was going to go onto film school after that'. He now has a clear career path, but in the process, he has made lots of new friends at DCAS. This is important because he described his life as boring before but now he has 'a lot to do and it's exciting. 'Now I can make a film whenever I have an idea, I can get involved with music projects, film projects, drama projects'.

Visit Number 2

**Experiences**  
What did you do at DCAS today?

During My Alternate Education I spent My day editing together Video Footage of a play that Dcas had put on at the pomegranate Theatre in Chesterfield.

**Feelings**  
How did you feel about it? Has it changed your views at all?

I had Fun, it's something that I've done before. I learnt a lot about the software I was using, and I was able to do something that I enjoyed.

## Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt in this theme highlight the benefits of providing access to support services through open access youth centres:

- Location of services in **myplace** buildings is valuable in delivering support for young people. It provides an efficient and economical means of service delivery for agencies, while providing accessible services to young people.

"Our information shop offers everything from benefits advice to help with relationships to a whole range of health services, pregnancy testing, all the employability and training side of things. Working in partnership with Prospects, Connexions and Culture Fusion we've been able to offer a broader spectrum of information services. Young people can come in on one particular thing, they might be coming in because they want they're NEETs...but what we find out is their housing is vulnerable, their relationship has broken down, and [they need] a whole variety of other services, so they're getting the full package, which means we can move them quicker into successful outcomes. It's a constant support because the shop is open

on a daily basis, it's a ground floor shop, they have their own entrance, there's no complicated systems to get access to the staff, they can just walk in, it's a shop floor as any other retail unit is a shop floor and that's worked really well" (Agency partner interview)

- Youth centres also provide neutral venues to deliver sensitive services such as sexual health without stigmatisation, and this can increase service access amongst young people.
- Lessons also highlight the crucial role of youth workers, both in providing informal support but also in signposting young people to other services. Youth workers may often be a first port of call for young people needing to discuss problems and issues and **myplace** centres offer the opportunity for youth workers to engage with large numbers of young people. Ensuring the sessions and activities provide time and space for youth workers and young people to talk is an essential component of increasing the usage of support services amongst young people.



## Working in Partnership



### Background

Partnership is a key element of the **myplace** programme and the case study areas included established partnership working that had built on existing relationships and networks, and new partnership working that had emerged during **myplace** project planning and delivery.

Partnership working between public and voluntary and community sector agencies is common, and centres were working across these sectors to develop new arrangements for commissioning and delivering services to young people. At the Culture Fusion centre in Bradford, partnership emerges from the location of services at the centre. Services include Connexions, the Early Intervention and Psychosis team, a schools linking network, the local authority youth service and the Peace Museum. The **myplace** building was an important factor in encouraging partnership working across the youth services sector. Agencies here felt that the building was an ideal place to gather together services from all over the district for meetings and events, contributing to building partnerships much wider than just between agencies located within the building:

**"They're holding a lot of network meetings for NEETS within the city; we've been going in there and meeting with other providers...It has helped with partnership building"**

(Partner agency interview)

Case study centres are also working in partnership with the private sector. In Chesterfield, a local consultant (who is also a donor) helped Fairplay to develop a strategy to raise their profile locally and to link in with the private sector *'I supported them in different ways, gave money and I've continued to do that'*. Strategies include developing relationships with individuals with a strong business profile and good contacts locally, as well as holding events such as auctions and dinners. Avenues for philanthropic giving have also been explored and the centre has been promoted through 'Destination Chesterfield,' which works in partnership with organisations and businesses to maximise the positive promotion of the town to internal and external audiences.

### Impact

The impacts of partnership working include increased opportunities to engage with young people, enhanced service delivery and sharing of resources, leading to enhanced prospects for sustainability.

**" I suppose what makes them even more sustainable is the fact that they can draw on and use one another's resources, which is much easier with everyone being based in the same place "** (Partner agency interview)



- Partnership emerges from, and offers the opportunity for, developing funding opportunities. A tenant at the OPEN centre in Norwich had participated with the centre in several joint bids to deliver youth activities. Other interviewees here reported that partnership working had taken place in relation to funding opportunities to deliver specific youth activities.
- A partnership approach at DCAS in Chesterfield brings access to young people in areas that DCAS wouldn't usually cover. DCAS work with a number of voluntary organisations that take their young people to the centre on a regular basis, for example, local churches offering youth activities in the summer holidays. The Church Project during the summer widened participation for new young people, who wouldn't otherwise get involved in the arts by 'seeing someone their own age that's doing it' at the centre (Staff interview).

**'It provides a hub for our project to actually happen, which is providing positive outcomes for example, we have got an increased attendance of...50%, we've got a decrease in exclusion of, up until last week it was, 100% over a three month period'** (Partner agency interview)

Partnership also contributes to enhanced service delivery. Culture Fusion has had a huge impact on joint working in Bradford between those agencies already working together and those (such as health) which were not.

**"We've just started a new contract and we launched it at Culture Fusion and we had a really good turnout of partners. I just think it's a place where adults and young people are happy to come to and it makes partnership working easier and working with young people easier"** (Partner agency interview)

- Partnership working can be an important contributor to cohesion outcomes.

BUILD is a Norfolk based registered charity providing social, leisure and learning opportunities to adults and young people with life-long disabilities. BUILD hold a session based at OPEN on Tuesday nights. This session overlaps with the open access drop-in session by half an hour and provides the opportunity for those from the BUILD group to mix with young people attending open access provision. This overlap enable those with lifelong disabilities attending BUILD to integrate and mix with other young people.

### Lessons learnt

- A key lesson to emerge from the case studies is the need for partnerships to respond to changing priorities and circumstances. For all the case study centres cuts in public service budgets and reorganisations of youth (and other) services had created uncertainties in relation to partnership working, and new arrangements were being negotiated across services and sectors. In Stoke on Trent, for instance, expectations around the

potential for services to be located in the Youth Campus have needed to be re-considered in the context of local cuts. Discussions between the **myplace** centre the local authority, and other service providers are addressing the role of the centre in new delivery arrangements.



- There are also lessons to emerge in relation to engaging with the private sector, although some case studies had found this challenging and would benefit from the sharing of experience and best practice. Experiences in Chesterfield and Blackburn highlight the importance of identifying local business sector champions.

# Revenue Funding

## Background

**myplace** is a capital programme and centres need to generate revenue funding to ensure their sustainability. Centres have developed a range of different funding strategies, and three main sources of income include commercial activities, private sector investment, and public sector income.

### Commercial activities

Commercial activities are dependent on the facilities and opportunities afforded by the **myplace** buildings. Centres have developed innovative approaches to generating commercial income, capitalising on the **myplace** buildings. At OPEN in Norwich, for instance, the **myplace** building is used to generate sustainable revenue streams which include conferencing facilities, a live music venue and a secure storage facility.

Identifying, and tapping into local opportunities is important. In Torbay a language school programme, which is a major business in Torbay, has been an important source of revenue for the Parkfield centre which provides facilities for language school pupils to engage in social activities. The centre is available for sole use of community and fee paying groups on two days per week. Utilising space when it is not used by young people offers opportunities to generate income:

**'We have lots of events that people will hire the building for, we have bands that come and hire the recording studio and media suite... young people are the**

**priority but there is time Monday to Friday, when young people should be at school, college and work - so we need to make sure the space is utilised during that time'** (Staff interview)

The hire of rooms and space to local businesses and other services is also an important source of income. At the Custom House in Middlesbrough, a range of services are tenants of the centre, paying rental rates for the hire of room space.

Many **myplace** centres include catering facilities or cafes which can provide additional sources of income. Balancing social and economic benefits has been an important factor in the running of the café at the Parkfield centre in Torbay.

Eat That Frog (a Community Interest Company) is running the café at Parkfield as a training kitchen for NEETS and is also providing employment opportunities for young people. This was reported by staff at the centre to be working very well. *"The benefit for young people is tenfold"*. The café also runs a Saturday morning cooking club, and gets involved in other activities such as fund raising for Children in Need, and teaching young people to bake. Eat That Frog representatives sit on the Management Board of the Parkfield centre and meet with staff once a week. The company contributes 7 per cent of its profit to Parkfield, in addition to paying for the use of the café facilities.

### **Private sector support**

A minority of centres have been successful at attracting private sector sponsors. Amongst these are the four **myplace** centres in the North West that have been developed by Onside.

Blackburn Youth Zone is an Onside centre which has been developed on the basis of the Onside funding model. The typical funding model is 40 per cent from public sector funding (local authority); 10 per cent from young people (membership and fees); 25 per cent from the private sector, and 25 per cent through grants and trusts. Blackburn Youth Zone has exceeded expectations in relation to private sector funding and now aims to generate 50 per cent of its revenue through private sector contributions. The local authority revenue contribution is guaranteed for three years.

Fifteen founder patrons have been secured each contributing £75k over three years. These patrons are typically high profile firms with strong local connections and are an important symbol of local business support. Another group of investors are being developed and will include professional and service organisations (such as law and accountancy firms) who also deliver services free to the centre. Finally, the centre is also developing opportunities for individual giving, through payrolls and in-time contributions, including the staff of founder patron companies.

A key aspect of success at Blackburn has been the Chair of the Board acting as a champion for the Youth Zone. The individual is a high profile local business person and has been able to draw on personal connections to attract private sector investors to the centre. It has also been important to provide benefits to investors, one of which has been regular meetings of founder patrons, hosted by the centre, which provide valuable networking opportunities.

However, public sector support is also vital, and the scale and quality of provision is

especially important in engaging the private sector and attracting investment – *‘local authority funding is crucial – private sector support is a product of the quality and scale of provision. We can’t pretend that it would work with a revamped tired old youth centre’* (Staff interview).

Other centres are developing relationships with local business through their giving and social responsibility programmes. A useful starting point is mapping the local private sector. In Halton, the manager of CRMZ rooms has mapped local companies, looked at corporate giving policies and identified those that are best suited to considering support for a youth and community centre. The next stage is to start to talk to potential partners in the business community with a view to securing future funding arrangements, be that in kind or financial.

### **Public sector funding**

A final model is for centres to be reliant on public sector funding, at least in the short term. An example is DCAS in Chesterfield, where the County Council is the primary funder and provides core funding.

However, these centres can be vulnerable to spending cuts, and to changing service priorities and a long term aim for **myplace** centres is to diversify funding bases to include income from a range of sources:

**"The core costs, we've traditionally been funded through grants and contracts to deliver services, that will remain the same for our daytime programmes, but for the evening provision, that is the extras, there isn't the youth funding that there used to be any**



**more from the council and that's what we're having to look at, how we generate our own income, a reserved income that we can spend on what we like to spend rather than it having to be on a daytime programme that somebody's identified the need for"** (Staff interview)

### Impact

- Centres have developed diverse funding portfolios, which have spread risk and in some cases brought additional benefits. In Blackburn, and Chesterfield, for instance, the ability to generate funds from non-public sector sources was important in enabling these centres to develop autonomy, and not to be driven by the targets or priorities of funders.

The mixed portfolio of funding at Fairplay, for instance, gives the centre flexibility as well, *'if we solely relied on the Council and Health funding then we would be limited and restricted to what they wanted us to be doing and the people they wanted us to be supporting, whereas when we've got money coming in from other organisations ....then that gives us flexibility'* (Trustee interview).

### Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt in this theme include

- There is a need for centres to develop long term business plans which aim to develop diverse funding portfolios.
- Partnership working offers opportunities to increase revenue

income. In Norwich, for instance, conference bookings at the OPEN centre have increased since the centre has negotiated preferential rates at the local Premier Inn for conference attendees. Working with other service providers has also helped centres to respond to funding opportunities and there is an important role for local authorities and commissioners in brokering relationships between providers of youth services to ensure that they are able to take advantage of funding opportunities.

- Having a high profile local champion is important in generating income from the private sector, and effective marketing is necessary for attracting investment.
- Lessons also highlight the need to balance commercial activities with the priorities and needs of young people. Involving young people in discussions about commercial activities is useful. At the Parkfield centre in Torbay, the centre closes to young people two days per week to enable income generating activities to take place. Involving young people in discussions about the need to undertake income generating activities has proved a helpful way to develop a solution which meets the business needs of the centre and is also acceptable to the young people attending activities there.

# Sheffield Hallam University

*myplace case study report*

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