

Leisure and cultural activities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Leisure Offer for Children Leaving Care, UASC and CLA

The aim of the offer is to promote healthy and active lifestyles, for the children and young people in our care. Working with Everyone Active (leisure provider) we have established an agreement for young people to be allocated a corporate leisure card after completion of a gym induction.

The young people can then use all the facilities at Harrow Leisure Centre, Bannisters Athletics Track, Hatch End Pool and Northolt Leisure Centre with their card and Everyone Active are able to produce a report on usage and invoice the council based on a reduced rate and on actual usage. After negotiation, Everyone Active have also agreed a reduced price (-25%) arrangement for In-house Foster Carers and IFA's and the Children placed with them.

New members sessions are run regularly and are available as and when required. Everyone Active have attended events to raise the profile of the offer and the UASC and LCT held a team meeting at the leisure centre and were given a tour of the building so that they are aware of the facilities available and can encourage young people to access these. Everyone Active also attended the launch of the Health Assessment Service for Children in Care to ensure our health partners are aware to promote the service.

71 from UASC/LC have accessed leisure activities at the leisure sites since April 2014.

Individual funding is also available to support children and young people to access activities this includes football clubs, travel to attend a place of worship and other activities of their choice.

The Virtual School

The Virtual School has organised a camping trip for 8 students over 2 days, a Drama Workshop and Theatre Trip for 11 students to see Matilda and a home economics session for 7 students. The BBQ and archery evening was attended by 6 students and carers and the Who Cares Trust newsletters were distributed to all CLA and Care leavers tri-annually. The funding of all of these additional enrichment activities are provided through the John Lyon Trust.

In order to raise aspirations the Virtual School have joined with the tri-boroughs (Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham) to visit three universities (SOAS, Goldsmiths and Kingston) at which 7 students attended.

The Youth Development Team offer

The main focus of the Youth Development Team (YDT) is to support the personal, social and emotional development of young people, raise their aspirations and build their resilience to prepare them for better transition to adulthood. This is achieved through a range of group based positive activities, individual mentoring, activities which promote youth participation in civic and community life, targeted group based activities, employment readiness and personal capacity through social action and volunteering programmes.

YDT have experienced, skilled and knowledgeable workforce in different project areas that coordinates and delivers services to our target group (Looked after young people; young people known to Targeted and Early Intervention Services; young people vulnerable and at risk). Some of the project areas are mentoring, employment readiness, Gangs exit path, detached youth work, social action and volunteering, youth clubs, youth voice through Youth Parliament, after school provision, holiday programmes and positive activities including health and fitness, music production and fashion and design projects.

No limits after school engagement for LAC and Young Carers, Wednesdays and Thursdays at Wealdstone Youth Centre.

Average weekly attendance is 6 for LAC virtual school and 12 for young carers

LINAB Project Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and Care Leavers

Venue & Time: Gayton Hotel Tuesdays 7pm to 9pm, WYC Thursdays 7pm to 9pm.

Number of young people register in the programme: 30

Average attendance: 15.

Youth Parliament: Voice of the young people to decision makers meets every Wednesday and represents the view of young people on major boards and panels in the council. There four members known to Children and Families with 2 LAC

Positive activities

Easter Holiday 2014: known to Children and Families 18, of which 8 were LAC

May half term 2014: 15 known to Children and Families, of which 7 were LAC

Summer 2014: four weeks delivery of positive activities including fashion, music production, outdoor sports, cooking, arts and crafts.

Summer 2014: 84 known Children and Families, 24 LAC

October half term: 16 known to Children and Families, 10 LAC

End of year 2014: 14 known to Children and Families, 8 LAC

February 15 half term 14 known to Children and Families, 9 LAC

Youth Take Over Day 2014:

Youth Takeover Day is a national event promoted by the Children's Commissioner that offers young people the opportunity to take over some or parts of specific adult work roles for the day. LAC are always given preference to participate and this year 9 out of the 10 were LAC. The experience ensured that young people opinions were valued, it also improved their confidence, self-esteem and career aspirations for the future.

Young Leaders Festival

The 5-day residential programme with the aim of improving how young people deal with relationships; maintain good health in the right way; cope with emotions; develop your own ideas; understand how to achieve wealth and richness of life, and contribute to your community. The programme helped the participants to build leadership, not just in the sense of leading a team, business or country, but taught them a lifestyle that showed them how to take charge of their life and lead themselves to a more positive and confident future.

Out of the 9 that attended 5 were LAC and the four were known to Children and Families Services

A young person said:

*I really enjoyed the Young Leaders Festival, I met lots of new friends and I learnt how and what it takes to be a leader. Before the event I felt that I needed to know what a leader was and how to be the best person I could be and the Young Leaders Festival really helped me understand. The best part of the event for me was the board breaking because it taught us that if we put our mind to things we could achieve anything. The coaches and staff were really nice and we felt that we could be ourselves around them and also it helped us to make friends because of the boost of confidence we got from them. After the event I felt like I could reach my goal in life and that you just have to keep trying because there is no such thing as failure as long as you keep trying. Overall it was a great experience and I would do it again. Some of the best parts were; the concert; the board breaking; getting over the electric fence and the camping experience.
(TS, Harrow young person)*

YDT actively promotes positive activities and projects to the target group within Children and Families teams as well as inclusion and designated teachers. Projects and activities are advertised broadly in the Local Authority through, the youth websites, flyers and posters and also directly to foster carers through social workers and key workers. YDT activities are also publicised in LA newsletters for example Harrow, Beyond Limits and Harrow Youth Parliament newsletters.

YDT has officers linked up to all teams in Children & Family Services.

The Children in Care Council also arrange social activities for the young people involved and have been branching out to engage young people from The Gayton in activities and ensuring their views are heard.