

Belfast City Council Youth Forum (BCCYF)

Outline of Core Work

The three main policies that influence the programme planning and work of the Forum are:

- OFMDFM 10-year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2006-16)
- BCC Community Support Plan (2008-10) which has identified the creation Of a Children and Young People's Multi-Agency Action Plan. *(Linked to NI 10-yr Strategy for CH&YP).*
- BCC Child Protection Policy – BCC is committed to a delivery of service that promotes good practice and protects children and young people from harm. This policy is regarded as a leader for Councils in Northern Ireland.

Supporting Documents include:

- Good Relations Strategy
- Playwork Code of Practice
- URBACT – Toolkit for youth participation in urban policies

As the Vision and Mission Statements of the Youth Forum indicate it is the Youth Forum's intention to influence Belfast City Council service provision for Children and Young People throughout the City.

Volunteer Hours

The Youth Forum members have completed **4388** hours since October 2008 as they carry out duties, work and projects on behalf of the forum and in service to the community section and wider council.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH FORUM PROJECTS

The work of the Youth Forum has been broken down into internal and external projects and sub-categorised by Developmental, Participation and Representation:

Internal Projects

Internal Projects are sourced from within the 7 Belfast City Council departments.

Developmental

January 2009

BCCYF members (aged over 15) undertake their 3-week Child Protection Keeping Safe training delivered internally by the Community Section and receive their awards certificates from the Belfast Trust.

January 2009

Committee Skills training facilitated by BCC Community Section.

February 2009

Hate Crime Awareness facilitated by BCC Good Relations Unit.

January 2010

The BCCYF undertake a 3-day residential in Gortin, Co. Tyrone to plan and exit strategy for the current Forum and the recruitment of a new forum for 2010-2012.

March 2009

Members of the BCCYF receive their Good Relations training delivered by the Good Relations Section.

Participation

July 2009

BCCYF Party in the Park which is a large annual event and was held in Barnet's Demesne and the theme for this event was 'Natural Highs' the idea being to continue to build on the theme explored in the BCC Youth Forum 2008 DVD (which won the national BT national Seen & Heard award). The overall aim was to give 12–17 year olds from all backgrounds and neighbourhoods within the City an opportunity to come together and try out a vast range of activities.

These included ten different climbing activities delivered through Belfast Activity Centre, art, cultural dance and sport/urban sport workshops. Art work from the event will be stored and used in the Bridges Skate Park currently in development.

Young people were offered the chance to explore alternatives and nurture interests that would promote future healthy life choices.

The event was free of charge and attracted 450 young people (registration forms recorded the attendance). We used the council Grant Aid Data base to contact groups and offered the event as part of their summer programme. Members of the public were also welcome and were made aware of the event through council websites and the local press.

Event evaluation was drawn from forms given out on the night and verbal feedback. This evidence records a very positive and enthusiastic response from the youth groups along with helpful comments to be considered when planning next year's event.

July/August 2009

BCCYF host the 3-day visit of Donegal Youth Forum to the City and also welcome their attendance at the annual Party in the Park event on 21st July 2009.

January 2010 – March 2010

BCCYF are once again involved in the BCC Community Safety Awards and have sponsored the Group category. The BCCYF members have been working alongside the Community Safety Section regarding category nominations and appointing finalists, they will attend and present at the Awards Ceremony later this year.

Representation

January 2009-Current

The BCCYF continue to work closely with all BCC departments in the planning and eventual launch of the Bridges Urban Sports Park.

February 2009

The BCCYF host a welcome activity and facilitate a consultation session as part of Cardiff City Council Youth Forums visit to Belfast.

October 2009

The BCCYF organised the 'Belfast – How We See It' event as part of the Community Sections contribution celebrating the re-opening of City Hall. One hundred young people aged 16-18 from schools and youth organisations within the City attended the event in the Council Chamber of the City Hall where they took part in a Q&A session. The panel, which included the Lord Mayor & six Youth Champions, was chaired by the presenter William Crawley. The successful event was filmed by the BBC for the Hearts and Minds weekly political programme and aired later that month.

October 2009

The BCCYF Chairperson is provided with an opportunity to 'shadow' the Lord Mayor for one day and writes a blog for the Lord Mayors website.

October 2009

Three BCCYF officers are invited to the Lord Mayors installation dinner; this is a great experience and the first time an opportunity like this had ever been extended to forum members.

November 2009

Ten YF members attend a BBC Children in Need discussion event that focuses on the views of young people on issues affecting their daily lives.

November 2009

Seven YF members attend an OFMDFM Anti- Bullying event at Stormont as part of the Anti-Bullying Awareness Week and the BCCYF Vice-Chair person sits on the debate panel with 3 MLAs.

November 2009

Three YF members attended the OFMDFM 'Be Seen, Be Heard' conference at Queens University. The opportunity was given for the BCCYF to share opinions with NI chief policy makers as part of the 3-year review of the 10-year Strategy for Children and Young People.

External Projects

External Projects are sourced from outside agencies and statutory bodies.

Developmental

March 2009

Self-Harm Awareness Workshop facilitated by Barnardos.

April 2009

2 day sails (Ocean Youth Trust) as part of Tall Ships.

October 2009

The BCCYF Mental Health sub-group attended the Mindwise '*Life goes on Play*' in Black Box Theatre, Belfast. The play raised awareness around the issue of schizophrenia in Young People. The BCCYF participated in a discussion with cast members afterwards.

October 2009

Nine Youth Forum members obtain OCN Level 1 in Outdoor Play through the Terry Enright Foundation. This will enable the BCCYF to support future Children and Young People projects within the community section.

November 2009

Fifteen members of the BCCYF receive their Millennium Youth Bronze Volunteer Awards due to the hours they contribute while in service with the Youth Forum.

December 2009 - current

The BCCYF 'Making it happen' sub-group has undertaken a 10-week education programme with Northern Ireland Youth Forum about project management from the inception of an idea to final project completion. The project idea currently taking shape is that of a 2-hour 'swap-it event' that would take place in the grounds of the City Hall. Young people from the City would come along with an item they no longer need or want and swap it for something else. The idea looks at recycling in an innovative way that reflects the current economic climate.

January 2010 – current

The BCCYF I-Citizen Project sub-group is involved with Scout Link NI in undertaking a 10-week project around citizenship and leadership.

February 2010 - current

The BCCYF Peer Education sub-group is working with the SOLVE Project in Ballysillan. They will undertake a 6-week training course in learning how to become peer educators in the communities they live in.

Participation

January 2009 – July 2009

The BCCYF in the role of peer educators devised a Hate Crime Awareness Session for 8-11 year olds in conjunction with the BCC Good Relations Unit. The sessions were piloted into 4 BCC Community Centres by forum members during the 2009 Summer Scheme with an intent that these sessions could be continued in future BCC summer schemes.

August 2009

The BCCYF participated in the Terry Enright Foundation, Mourne Challenge and successfully complete the 2-day event.

January 2009 – June 2009

The BCCYF Social Housing sub-group was approached by NI Housing Executive (NIHE) to assist with the development of a housing information package. BCCYF created a prototype in the form of a comic book aimed at 16-21 year olds. In 2010/11 this package will be available through NIHE to young people in the City and throughout the Province.

February 2009

BCCYF consult with Belfast City Centre Management and the Challenge for Youth organisation. These consultations centred on young people using the City Centre for shopping, working and socialising with a view to informing future BCCM planning and engagement.

September 2009 – January 2010

The BCCYF Mental Health sub-group followed on from issues that developed from PIPS training in suicide awareness in September 2009. This group wanted to put young people with mental health issues/illness under the spotlight to highlight the difficulties faced in undertaking their daily lives and the support provision available to them. The project was called 'Stand by me'. The group consulted with the following groups: Aware NI, Contact Youth NI, Samaritans and Simon Community.

September 2009

Five members of the BCCYF and the Co-ordinator take part in Simon Community Charity Abseil at the Europa Hotel. They raised £500 in sponsorship money for ongoing projects with homeless young people in the City.

November 2009

The youth forum health sub-group organise a performance of Samaritans Play 'This was your Life' in Olympia Community Centre. The Play raises awareness around the issues of suicide and its affect on Families. Ninety young people from six city wide youth groups attend are invited and attend.

December 2009

BCCYF contribute to an extensive response to a Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) consultation on the NI Youth Assembly.

January 2010

Members of the BCCYF attend two consultations with:

- a) The Institute for Conflict Research on how the history of Northern Ireland over the past 30 years should be taught as part of the history curriculum within secondary schools.
- b) Queens University Sociology Department looking at how the legacy of the Northern Ireland troubles affect young people today

Representation

January 2009 - current

BCCYF members continue the writing of articles as young columnists for BCC City Matters magazine which is distributed into every household in the Belfast metropolitan area.

April 2009

Three BCCYF officers, a Youth Champion (Councillor Bobby Stoker) and the Children and Young People's Co-ordinator represented Belfast City

Council when they travelled to Porto in Portugal to attend a 3-day European Conference on Youth Policies in Local Government.

May 2009

Polish Cultural Week and Migrant Workers Festival – Art project involving BCCYF, Polish YP, Golden Thread Gallery and ICTU.

September 2009 – January 2010

Members of the BCCYF have been consulted by the Department of Environment (DOE) Road Safety section in a province-wide campaign as part of the DOE 10-year Road Safety Strategy. These young people also attended the launch of the TV “Crashed Lives” campaign aimed at young men aged 16-21.

October 2009

The BCCYF attended and supported a Young Peoples Health Roadshow in Benview Community Centre, North Belfast. This event was organised by statutory agencies and community groups based in North Belfast.

January 2010 – current

Three young people from BCCYF have been invited and have agreed to sit on the Council for the Homeless NI (CHNI) Charter Panel. This panel will also work closely with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in creating a Charter that will develop housing options and investigate housing issues facing young people between the ages of 16-30.

January 2010

The Chairperson and Secretary of the BCCYF attend the Stormont launch of the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly proposals.

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