



Young People Inclusion Project Dumfries and Annan

Service overview and information
for referring services and agencies



With the support of local partners and community groups, Sacro successfully applied for funding from the Scottish Government and European Social Fund-supported *Stage 2 Aspiring Communities Fund (ACF)* for the purpose of implementing a Young People Inclusion Project.

Following the completion of the Stage 1 project, it was identified that an increasing number of young people aged 16 to 25 manage to slip through the system and are unwilling or unable to engage with the services and systems available to them. It was also recognised that these young people are often identified as being socially dysfunctional and can be at increased risk of becoming marginalised or isolated as an individual or small peer group within their own community or the community they now reside in. On this basis it was recommended that consideration should be given to the development and implementation of a Young People Inclusion Project (YPIP) to support identified isolated and/or disengaged young people aged 16 to 25 years in the towns of Annan and Dumfries.

Sacro

Sacro is a national voluntary organisation working across Scotland to make communities safer by reducing conflict and offending. Sacro works in the community with those in conflict, those responsible for causing, and those affected by crime or other harm.

Sacro recognises that promoting 'social inclusion' is at the heart of this project as 'social exclusion' can be viewed as a cause and consequence of a range of antisocial and other behaviours, particularly in areas of deprivation. In relation to the Young People Inclusion Project, Sacro will work closely with partners to develop activities and strategies to engage the most excluded individuals and groups, including those causing disruption in their communities. The project will particularly target young people (16 to 25) at risk from social exclusion and those who face multiple barriers to engaging and participating in their communities and the wider society.

Dumfries and Annan - Young People Inclusion Project (YPIP)

YPIP will provide a referral-based (including self-referral) support and inclusion service for young people between the ages of 16 to 25 years who have been identified as been in need of – and likely to benefit from – a level of guidance and support. The project understands that the young people referred will have a diverse range of experiences and differing needs. On this basis we will – where possible – develop a support plan agreed by the referrer and most importantly the young person.

The development and implementation of YPIP will be based on and informed by the following approaches:

- i. Assertive Outreach model
- ii. Relationship-based approach
- iii. Desistance

i. Assertive outreach model

Assertive Outreach is an effective and crucial method in delivering services to hard-to-reach individuals or groups needing support. Underpinned by social justice values, Assertive Outreach recognises the many barriers faced by vulnerable and disconnected young people when accessing services. By its very nature, being vulnerable and disconnected often means young people do not have adults to support and advocate for them when seeking help. A lack of confidence; limited resources; a sense of powerlessness; speech, language and communication needs (SLCN); and cultural barriers can make negotiating access to services or attending appointments difficult.

To mitigate this, Assertive Outreach is a proactive approach to engagement; delivering support and interventions to young people if required. It challenges the idea of the young person being responsible for engaging with services and showing they want support. Instead it asks "who is in most need of this service?". The model targets those young people causing the most issues and concern. They are often the most vulnerable and the intervention involves deliberate and proactive outreaching to them in their space. In essence we will attempt to maintain contact with young people even when engagement is difficult. In other words, missed appointments and no shows result in a doubling of effort on the part of the YPIP to engage and find ways to work with the young person rather than a cessation of support.

ii. Relationship-based approach

An effective young person support and inclusion service will value and encourage a strong emphasis on this relationship in order to promote engagement and retention in services, and because there is evidence that a high quality working relationship is therapeutic in itself.

Qualitative research involving young people with multiple and complex needs has found that the young people place very strong value on having a quality relationship with workers. Where possible, workers from YPIP will 'walk alongside' young people in the manner of a partnership; helping young people identify pathways through life or courses of action that are viable and consistent with their goals.

YPIP recognises that strong, trusting working relationships perform at least the following five major functions:

1. Building a sense of security
2. Teaching relationships and other life skills
3. Acting as a vehicle or platform for the delivery of various other supportive interventions
4. Facilitating re-connection with a young person's ecological community
5. Facilitating engagement with services

iii. Desistance

The desistance process can often be unique to an individual young person that relies on them facing up to and dealing with various external and internal factors that impact on them. Young people's desistance from continued involvement in offending or antisocial behaviour is usually not down to one thing but a combination of activities, including services and supports that contribute to a change in their social circumstances. Research suggests that some of the key factors that contribute to a young person to desist from involvement in offending and antisocial behaviour include:

- > Life course – maturation and ageing;
- > Relationships – forming or renewing strong supportive prosocial relationships;
- > Employment – gaining employment and related sense of achievement;
- > Faith – adopting a religion and becoming part of a new community. This can also be achieved through other commitments or causes that resonate with the young person;
- > Identity and self-belief – developing positive self-identity and cultivating self-belief. Having a clear sense of meaning in their lives.

In delivering the YPIP, 'young people inclusion workers' will have an understanding of the above key approaches and other important areas of impact on young people such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Workers will also be aware of the focus of the service in providing support with a commitment to inclusion and engagement for the young people we work with. Workers will understand that due to the temporary funding nature of the service and the agreed service profile that we are not a long-term support or intensive support service and that the focus will be on short-term goals in relation to engagement and inclusion with other services and groups.

Service Overview

The YPIP is a referral based service (including self-referral) aimed at young people aged 16 to 25 who may benefit from additional support to engage with services and possibly reintegrate into their communities through involvement in pro-social activities and pastimes. Through the 'Stage 1 Scoping Project' element of this process, our engagement with partners, community groups and young people identified that there was a number of young people in this age range who for a variety of reasons didn't respond to or engage with services. It was also recognised that these young people were likely to benefit from engagement with these services be it employment support, health care or other areas of support identified to meet their needs.

National data would suggest that there are a significant number of young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and possible other needs including mental health

issues who have difficulty in functioning in certain aspects of their life including engagement with agencies and support services. While many of these services recognise the issues and are able to identify those young people who may benefit from additional support to assist and encourage their engagement, they also state they do not have the resources or structure in place to adequately address this issue. It is therefore envisaged that YPIP will be in a position to work in partnership with a range of agencies and community groups to support the effective engagement of identified young people and facilitate their subsequent involvement with services and other supports. All Sacro staff working in YPIP will undertake awareness-raising in the area of working with young people with SLCN.

YPIP is also acutely aware of the additional challenges that vulnerable girls and young women often face. Enabling gender-specific approaches – including specific approaches to supporting vulnerable girls and young women – is a specific priority for Sacro. Sacro recognises that many vulnerable girls and young women have histories of trauma and vulnerability and for most, their needs are best met through a supportive welfare-orientated approach. Sacro also recognises that a correlation exists between the victimisation and abuse of girls and young women and high risk behaviours such as substance misuse, self-harm and suicide and these experiences in turn can contribute to truancy from school, absconding and other early onset concerns. This in turn may also be a pathway to drug and alcohol misuse and sexual exploitation. Sacro recognises that in the development and delivery of services to girls and young women, the importance of relationship-based work cannot be overestimated. Therefore our practice with girls and young women identifies relationships as being central to effective practice both throughout the assessment process and service delivery.

In line with international research, Sacro also recognises that young people living through and impacted by abuse and trauma (Adverse Childhood Experiences – ACEs) are at an increased risk of inequalities, disadvantage and poorer wellbeing outcomes including poor physical and mental health and reduced educational and social attainment. In working with vulnerable young people, Sacro will be looking to ask not “what is wrong with you?” but “what has happened to you?”.

Staffing

The Young People Inclusion Project Team		
Brian McClafferty (team leader)	bmclafferty@sacro.org.uk	077 7357 3917
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Brian, Katy and Lou will also have a pool of sessional staff to assist in supporting young people.

For further information, please contact any of the team.

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