

LEGACY

The Croydon Children's Fund

Reflections On Working in and With Schools

November 2007

Projects/Services which have received funding from The Croydon Children's Fund

THEME	PROJECTS	
	STATUTORY	VOLUNTARY
YOUTH CRIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP), Youth Offending Team (YOT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Junior Youth Inclusion Project (JYIP), Croydon Youth Development Trust (CYDT) Croydon Young People's Project (CYPP), SOVA RUOK, Victim Support
OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES/ PLAY/ PREVENTATIVE WORK		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valley Park TOC H – Peppermint Centre Together in Waddon Croydon Community Bus
WITH BME CHILDREN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beat the Street, Croydon Youth Development Trust (CYDT)
PARTICIPATION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croydon Xpress, Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA)
IN SCHOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaching Out, Borough of Croydon (Education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place2be Voluntary Reading Help
WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated Therapy, Primary Care Trust (PCT) (Group A) ADHD Development Worker, Borough of Croydon (Ed Phyc) Willow – Bereavement, Primary Care Trust (PCT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garwood Foundation, Rutherford School Croydon Mencap, (Benefits programme)
PARENTING		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parentline Plus (PLP) PATCH Project at Croydon People's Housing Association (CPHA)

Notes:

- Many of the projects/services cross over these themes, but this gives some indication of their primary functions
- All of the projects/services above were funded from the outset in 2003/04 until 2007/08 unless otherwise indicated below
- Beat the Street, Parentline Plus and Voluntary Reading Help were funded from 2003/04 until 05/06
- Place2be was funded from 2003/04 until 06/07
- RUOK received a one off payment in 2004/05 and is being funded in 2007/08

Key Messages From Children's Fund Projects & Evaluators:

- There should be mechanisms to pass information on to new staff in schools and in mainstream services so there is efficient induction and transfer of responsibility and knowledge of different services.
- Support from the Head Teacher is crucial for this to be successful.
- Ongoing support should be provided for teachers – reviewing and updating specific services for children in different areas of support, as well as ongoing awareness raising and training on different issues facing children and their families.
- This needs to take into account staff changes and therefore be a rolling programme of training and support.
- There needs to be better coordination and collaboration between statutory and voluntary sectors working in and with schools. In this context there should be capacity-building and network meetings for all agencies working with children and young people.
- In transition projects there needs to be collaboration between services working to improve the transition period for young people including mentor projects, youth workers, teachers, youth inclusion projects.
- There also needs to be increased support in Year 7 through schemes such as 'buddying'.
- There are projects providing services that are complimentary to the school environment, such as the Community Bus, JYIP, TOC H, Valley Park and Together in Waddon. This type of unrestricted outreach work allows projects to offer different types of activities and sometimes reaches some of the children that find it hard to cope or have behavioural issues in a school setting.

Star Examples From Children's Fund Projects

★ Place2be

Place2be have school project managers in a number of schools in Croydon including Applegarth Infants and Juniors, Kingsley, Fairchildes, Rowdown, Castle Hill, Good Shepherd and Rockmount.

There is a lunchtime referral service open to all the children, both individually (Place2be) and in groups (Place2talk). The individual needs of different children are assessed and the appropriate support offered. Place for Parents also works with parents of children in Place2be to offer support to the family as a whole.

The lunchtime clubs or sessions for talking, help with self-confidence, speech and language development. Place2be fits in with the school themes addressed in circle time and ensure that they work closely with staff in the school. There is also additional support for the staff through their Place2think programme

'Stay and Play' also offers an opportunity for parents and their toddlers to meet in school hours. As this has bi-lingual assistants, it is accessible to people who do not have English as their first language.

★ Reaching Out

A Project based in Elmwood Infant and Junior School, providing enriching activities for asylum seeker and refugee children. Specialist resources have been acquired and made available in school to build up functional literacy and develop confidence levels and encourage integration within the school curriculum and wider community. An element of pastoral support is developed through one-to-one and group work as well as outings/visits.

The children like reading stories, especially fables/fairytales about other countries, playing word games, talking about their mother-tongue and writing poems and stories in dual-languages to share with other children. They especially enjoyed writing personal profiles about themselves and going on outside trips/visits (for example to the clock tower).



Reaching Out: In Elmwood Infant and Junior

★ ADHD Development Worker

The ADHD Development Worker sends information about ADHD to all maintained schools and provides support for staff through regular meetings of the ADHD Forum. There is a growing list of Croydon schools that have received training about ADHD. Support is provided for parents in the form of an ADHD Parents Group.

One example of how the ADHD Worker provides support is demonstrated by Shirley High School which contacted the worker to say that they needed support in how to handle children with ADHD. The ADHD Development worker then offered training to the SENCOs and Teaching Assistants. Following the training they requested training for all the staff.

★ Integrated Therapy

The project workers link with schools in a child centred way, going in to work with particular children and then problem solving with staff in the school and providing appropriate advice. The team also provide training and workshops for staff.

Taking an example of partnership between a Children's Fund Project and Oval Primary School to improve the life of one child. A child and his mother attended a Speech-language and Occupational Therapy (SPOT) Group and the school was provided with a programme with strategies to enhance the child's functioning in school. As his mother was also given these strategies from the SPOT group, she was able to support the school in implementing the strategies, which worked to great effect. Continued monitoring and support to the school was provided by the project through further school visits and liaison with the school's link Speech & Language Therapist.



Integrated Therapy: Working with schools

★ Together In Waddon

The project runs two weekly after school clubs for pupils of Duppas Junior School which offer a range of activities including sports and games, arts and crafts, drama, singing and dance. The other term-time clubs offer similar activities and work with two age groups: 8 to 11 and 11 to 14. These clubs cater for the different needs of children attending Junior or Secondary School.

During the summer holidays the project offers up to four weeks of activities and trips, with separate days assigned to the different age groups. Those leaving Year 6 and making the transition to Secondary School are encouraged to attend all the sessions, which helps them get used to the changes involved in moving on.



Together in Waddon: In Duppas Junior

★ TOC H, Valley Park

Developing a new club for young people in the Broadgreen target area. 'Just Chillin' is providing a range of activities that allow children to play and learn in a safe and vibrant community centre that is outside the formal school environment. Interactive methods are used to teach, for example, computing and science, whilst there are also frequent outings/trips.

The children using the 'Just Chillin' Kidz Club' liked many of its activities including street dancing, arts and craft, swimming and BBQs. They also appreciated the spacious building, the workers, the tuck shop, the Mad Science Club and the fact that the Community Bus visits the centre. The 'Just Chillin' Club' has helped children to feel happier and calmer, healthier, more confident and encouraged them to make their own decisions. It seems to have a positive effect on their school life with 12 out of 13, 11 to 13 year olds spoken to, in the evaluation, saying they would like to carry on in education and 11 saying they are working better at school since attending the club.

★ Willow

Willow is proactive in working in partnership with schools where a child is experiencing loss and change. Willow aims to empower school staff to work more confidently with issues around bereavement. This happens through staff training, telephone consultation, liaison support between health and education staff and individual support of teachers and learning support assistants in the school setting.

Individual work with children often takes place in the school setting and schools have been very accommodating in providing an appropriate, safe and confidential place for the work to happen.

★ Croydon Xpress Working On Transition

Croydon Xpress has produced a booklet for pupils in Year 7 at Addington High School with advice on what they need to know coming into Secondary School. This information was put together by Year 6 and Year 7 pupils (ages 10-12 years) as a practical tool for students who would find themselves in a similar position in transition. Croydon Xpress also hold their Xpression Zone events at schools around Croydon to give children a say so that their voices can be fed into broader policy development. They also work with a wide range of schools in their PSHE and Citizenship agendas.

★ Junior Youth Inclusion Project

JYIP is an example of a project that best works outside the formal school setting. They can work with students who may have been referred by schools for behavioural issues in a different setting and be flexible as to what activities they can do with them.

Kingsley and Ecclesbourne have supported the project since it started providing regular referrals and positive and consistent communication. The project is also making inroads in working with a range of different junior and secondary schools around Crodyon.

In the evaluation of the project, The Head Teacher and the SENCO of Kingsley Primary School said that they have regular professional meetings with JYIP workers. The project didn't start off easily but whenever there were any problems or issues the workers would come and talk about it. The project workers were identified as excellent and positive role models. This made it acceptable for boys who thought other projects were 'uncool', to go to JYIP. School staff said that JYIP works with small numbers of children, but works with the most difficult children to support their learning.

Children were asked what they liked about the project and they identified physical activities like football, playing games, being able to talk to friends and having fun. They valued going out to places and the residential last summer. Some children liked circle time: "alright - talk about school-day and what you are going to do", while others suggested some changes, for example, "needs to change

- people need to listen and respect each other
- speak one at a time." The young people liked the staff and said that they were calm and happy so that the children were able to talk to them about school problems.

One boy commented about his behaviour: "School is good now. I don't have any more fights. Peter (JYIP worker) told me fighting does not always solve problems. Now I tell the teacher if there is a problem. I don't cuss teachers, I talk to them."

★ Children And Young People's Project

Archbishop Lanfranc Secondary School linked up with the mentoring project and found that they would work together to investigate and address the best support for individual children that were having difficulties at home. The project has a number of referrals from other primary and secondary schools including Haling Manor and Victoria House.

Tips For Project Workers And Managers

The following analysis was carried out by project workers from a range of Projects funded by the Croydon Children's Fund about what helps and hinders working in and with schools.

What Hinders Working With Schools?

- Time and management
- The capacity of the organisation and the schools
- The time restraint for the staff in the schools
- Lack of time in organisations for outreach and to travel
- Can be difficult to communicate due to staff being so busy and not knowing who to speak to about specific issues.
- Restricted by funding as to which geographical areas you can work with children in some projects
- Lack of parental interest or consent given by parents/ guardians
- Some schools do not welcome outside involvement and feel they are self sufficient – staff may not recognise the value of external services
- Some schools are not aware of what voluntary agencies have to offer and these agencies are themselves insecure in terms of funding
- There may be a suspicion in schools of workers who do not have 'professional teaching qualifications'
- Informal education is not always valued in the context of schools needing to cover the national curriculum. May have to work to the schools agenda which may sometimes conflict with the interest of young people.
- Sometimes hard to reach all the BME communities.
- Language barriers.
- If a project can't be sustained due to lack of long term funding.

What Helps?

- Flexibility is crucial in order to adapt work to fit around the curriculum, to be able to fit in with different groups of children unexpectedly and to specific school situations.
- Being aware of what the school already has to offer and how to build on this, but also offer something new and different.
- Sharing concerns and setting up a two-way communication and feedback system where relevant information is shared and relevant people identified. In this way well informed staff can also alert services to particular needs of different children.
- Adapting service to current needs of the school e.g. circle times, group work on friendships, current issues etc. Linking with PSHE Citizenship agenda. Fitting into other parts of the schools agenda.
- Communication – regular meetings and proactive training with staff team. There must be information and support given to contribute to and develop a whole school ethos. Positive relationships with the Head Teacher should be formed as well as with specific staff with interest in the different services.
- Continued liaison with staff to be able to outreach and work with other services, to meet needs of different children. Proactive liaison between different agencies and schools is vital to achieve meaningful dialogue and commitment to services.

- Working together to have a whole school approach to S.E.A.L. (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) of school. Have a holistic approach to achieving the Every Child Matters objectives.
- Offering good quality and free training – getting a good reputation amongst the different schools in an area.
- Seek experienced help to integrate children with ASD, ADHD and different forms of disabilities.
- Feed back to schools with any outputs in the form of reports, leaflets, DVDs.
- If at first you don't succeed try again.

Acknowledgements:

This document was written by Vicky Johnson with Robert Nurick, the local evaluators for the Croydon Children's Fund and was based on information from the full evaluation of the Croydon Children's Fund, available from Croydon Voluntary Action, and a workshop run with the following projects: ADHD Development Worker, Children And Young People's Project, Croydon Community Bus, Croydon People's Housing Association, Croydon Xpress, Integrated Therapy Project, Junior Youth Inclusion Project, TOC H, Valley Park, Place2be, Reaching Out, Together In Waddon
In addition, information was included from: Beat The Street, Parentline Plus, Youth Inclusion Support Panel, Willow

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children's fund

What is the Children's Fund?

The Croydon Children's Fund programme was introduced in 2003. The fund was primarily set up to develop services for children at risk of social exclusion in all local areas, aiming to provide better increased co-ordinated preventive services. Funding is targeted at children and young people aged 5-13 years old and also their families.

The fund is part of the Government's strategy to tackle disadvantage and inequality arising from child poverty and social exclusion, through addressing national priorities including improving school attendance and attainment, improving health (including mental health) and reducing crime and anti social behaviour.

A key element of the programme is that services are locally determined according to local need and planned in consultation with children and families from the outset. In Croydon a comprehensive mapping and consultation exercise was undertaken to find out the views of children, young people and their families and this was used in the development of the initial three-year strategy for the Croydon Children's Fund.

This report was commissioned by the Croydon Children's Fund,
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