



Community Planning Aberdeen

Progress Report	Project End Report: LOIP Project 9.5 Increase by 50% the number of 10 to 16 year olds in target areas of the city who access youth community activity by 2023
Lead Officer	Eleanor Sheppard – Chair of Children’s Services Board
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Date of Report	22 February 2023
Governance Group	CPA Board – 19 April 2023

Purpose of the Report
This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project Aim 9.5 which sought to increase by 50% the number of 10 to 16 year olds in target areas of the city who access youth community activity by 2023 and seeks approval to end project.

Summary of Key Information
1 BACKGROUND
1.1 Young people in conflict with the law are often the most vulnerable young people in our communities. Young people in conflict with the law are often victim themselves.
1.2 When young people have access to services that provide opportunities for them to use their time constructively and develop healthy and trusting relationships with adults, then the chances of them offending are reduced. Increasing the number of young people in target areas of the city accessing activities in their community will lead to improved outcomes in relation to wellbeing and youth justice.
1.3 Data showed that there were 6 community-based groups for children and young aged 10-16 people running in 2019 (this is data for local authority provision) with 40 participants. Community-based provision stopped across the city from 2020 to some of 2021.
2 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM
2.1 Against this background, in February 2022 the CPA Board approved the <u>project charter</u> for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to Increase by 50% the number of 10 to 16 year olds in target areas of the city who access youth community activity by 2023.

2.2 The impact of the pandemic on services for young people was significant. Groups and organisations were forced to close and some never reopened. Young people who depended on these services were impacted. At the time of discussions about the improvement project, it was known that even before the pandemic that Kincorth didn't have much to offer young people in the way of community-based activities and also that Kincorth was affected by antisocial behaviour caused by some young people. Given this position and that there were no groups currently available, the project agreed to start with setting up a group for children and young people in this area.

3 WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?

3.1 The project wanted to see if it could increase the number of children and young people taking part in community-based activities and if it could create a sustainable model for the setting up and continuation of youth groups. Two change ideas were tested, namely:

1. Established a new youth group co-designed with children and young people

3.2 The project tested the establishment of a new youth group in the community as way of both increasing engagement and participation of young people, but also to increase the number of facilities and places for sustainable activities for young people. As per para 2.2, Kincorth was identified as the initial test area. The project focused on the Primary 6 and 7 age group because it saw the benefits of beginning to build relationships with young people in Kincorth from as young an age as possible.

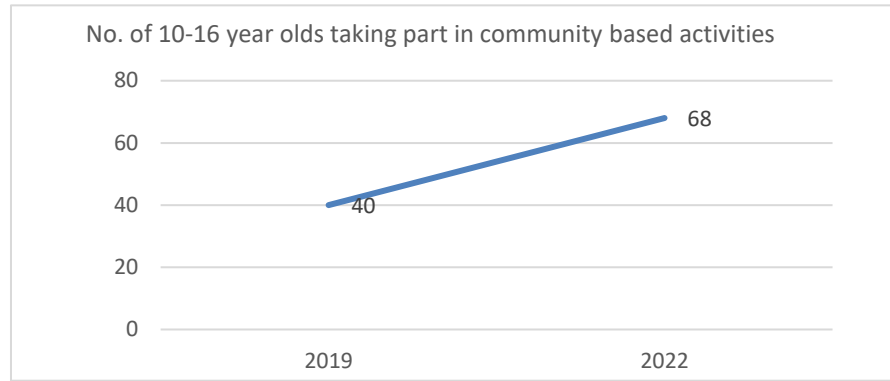
3.3 The Group recognised that setting a group up was not enough, for it to have a chance to succeed it needed to be co-designed by young people and as such we also tested the co-production with young people of a programme of activities to be offered at the Group.

2. Developed a volunteer led youth group model

3.4 The project agreed that once the above change had been tested and outcomes studied, it was important that the model of setting up and running a youth group was sustainable and not reliant on a single agency. As such a volunteer led youth group model would be developed and tested. This test looked to expand the number of community youth based activities available across the city, but ensuring that these were sustainable by empowering local communities to start local volunteer led youth groups in their communities with support and guidance available.

4 HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

4.1 Yes, we have achieved and surpassed the aim. In 2022, 68 10-16 year olds attended community activity citywide an increase of 70% compared to 2019 when 40 10-16 year olds accessed community activity.



4.2 During 2020-2021 community-based youth work stopped because of the pandemic. The nearest year to give us comparable data is 2019.

4.2 In terms of overall participation/attendances we also saw an increase with 938 attendances throughout 2022 citywide compared to 300 in 2019, this is a 212% increase.

The impact of the changes we tested are as follows:

New co-designed Youth Group in Kincorth

4.3 During 2019 there were no registered participants from Kincorth taking part in ACC youth work community-based activities. In early 2022, the project co-designed with children and young people in the Kincorth area a new youth group. This resulted in between March and December 2022, **34** young people from Kincorth participating in the group. This shows that the change idea of establishing a co-designed youth groups in target areas has been successful.

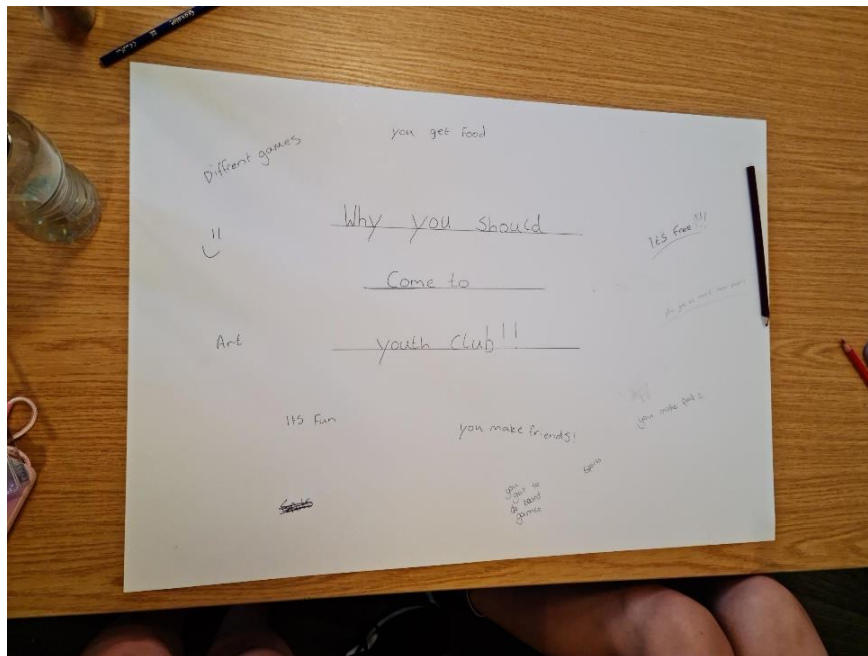
4.4 The Group was held weekly on a Wednesday evening from 6.15 to 8pm. This day/time was chosen as we were mindful of the age of the group and considered anytime after 8pm to be too late. It took place in was Kincorth community centre, which is a large multi-purpose centre between the 2 primary schools in the area. Location is very important as it has be accessible for everyone you are trying to attract to the group. The centre has a games hall, classrooms, kitchen and a coffee bar all of which widens the scope of what can be offered.

4.5 Staff have reflected that getting the right day/time/location is important as the group has to be planned and delivered according to the needs of its members and not staff. It seems an obvious point, but groups which are set up according to the preferred start and finishing time of its staff rather than participants are less likely to succeed. For children of P6 and 7 age, finishing too late would prohibit some from coming and starting too early wouldn't suit the routine and circumstances of others. Kincorth is fortunate in having a large and multi-purpose community centre within travel distance for most; not every community in the city has this.

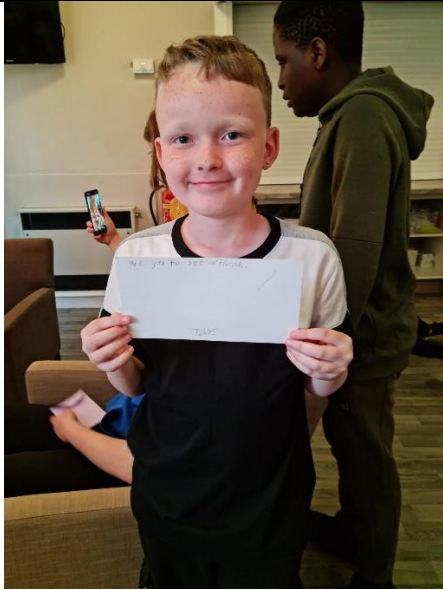
4.6 Young people were asked what they enjoyed about their group. They said: we get to make friends; it's very fun; you get to do art, sports, games and make food.



Some of the Kincorth group exploring "The Gramps"

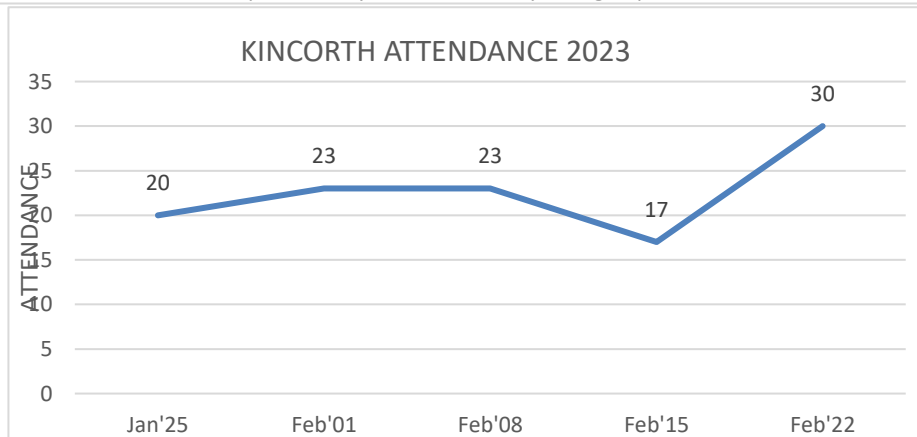
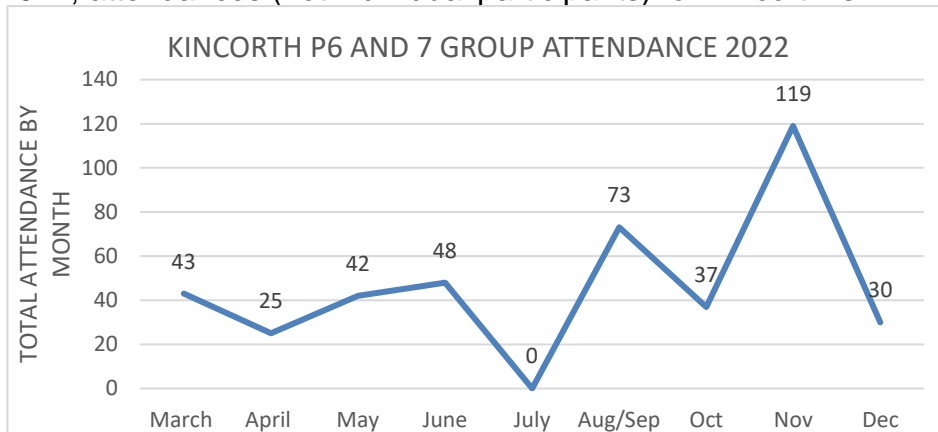


Food is very important for young people!



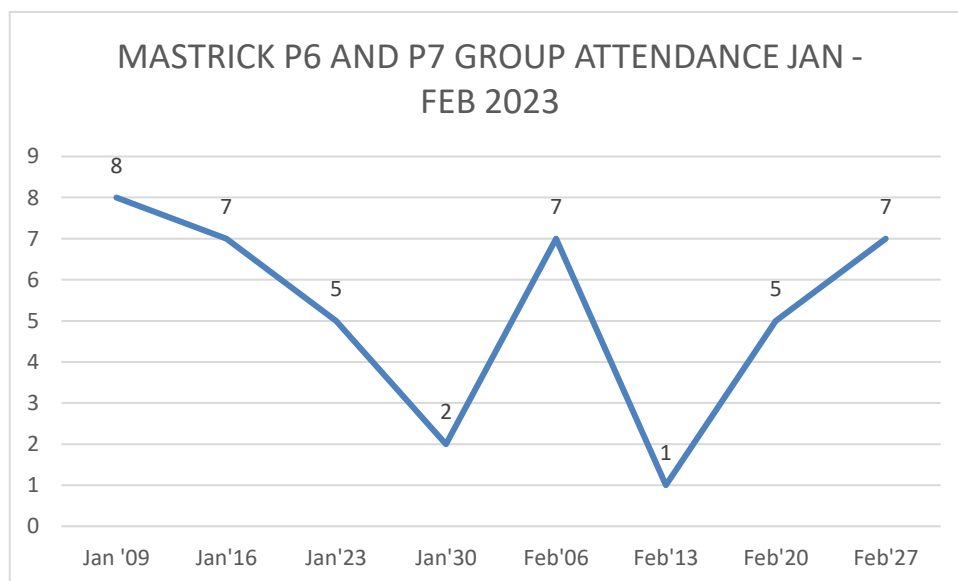
Feedback shows that opportunities to meet friends and make new ones are very important.

4.7 In 2022, attendances (not individual participants) for Kincorth is 417



4.8 Youth Workers work term time hence low numbers in July and October. Low number in December due to staff absences and group not able to run. The further test described below empowering volunteers to establish and run youth groups in their communities looked to remove/minimise this situation and enable groups to run throughout the year, particularly over the school holidays. The peak in November was likely caused by raised awareness about the group and young people who hang around the centre asking if they could join.

- 4.9 The Group co-produced with young people a programme of activities decided by the participants themselves. This saw the first few weeks of the group, the young people doing team-building and “getting to know each other” activities: the forming and norming stages of group development. Thereafter the group co-deigned a programme of activities that included visits to the local nature park, cooking sessions, arts and crafts and indoor games. Every session involves a period where the group stops mid-way through and they all sit together in the community centre coffee bar for a snack and conversation. This quieter time is used to check in with the group that everyone’s okay and whether there’s anything we need to change.
- 4.10 The co-produced programme has been very impactful and it is essential that the group members feel included in decision making and have ownership of the programme. Trying to second guess what the group wants and offering a programme that doesn’t interest them will soon lead to disengagement and boredom.
- 4.11 The establishment of the group has also had an impact on anti-social behaviour in the area. The number of calls relating to antisocial behaviour in Kincorth reduced by 16% in 2022, from 282 calls in 2021 to 238 for 2022.
- 4.12 In light of the impact of the Kincorth group, a similar group to the one in Kincorth has been developed in the Mastrick area of the city. It was set up to cater for children who are too young to take part in the diversionary programme known as the Mastrick Hub. Attendance numbers so far show that the club is popular with the target audience.
- 4.13 9 children participated in the Mastrick Group at the start of 2023 with 42 attendances overall. At the request of the community centre we operate a ratio of 4 children to 1 member of staff. With a staff complement of 3 the group will not exceed 12.

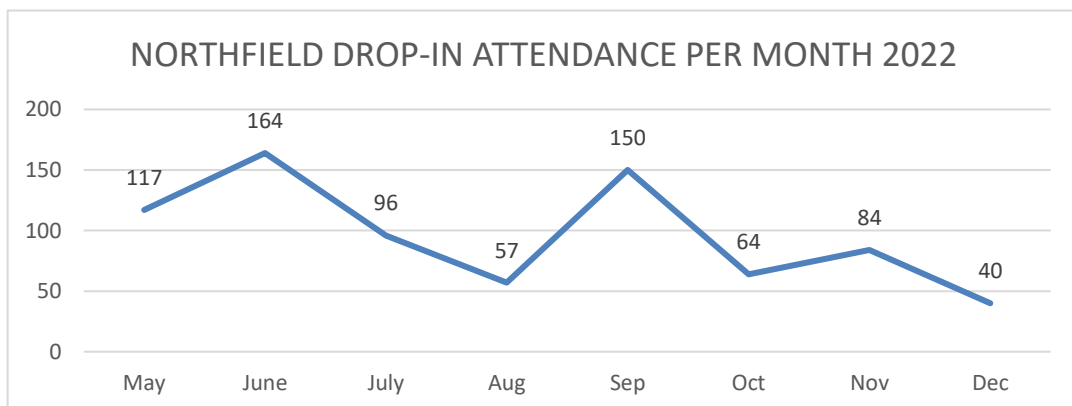


4.14 Young people taking part in the Mastrick group were asked what they enjoyed most about their group. They said it was doing things with friends and getting to do cooking.

Developing a volunteer led youth group model - Northfield Community Centre Youth Group

4.15 To ensure a sustainable model for future youth community activity, taking the learning from the two groups described above, a third community-based youth groups has been established. This has focused on testing a volunteer led youth group model and whether empowerment of local volunteers with support only from the Youth Team, increases the number of community youth groups available and number of young people participating. The Group established is called the Northfield Community Centre Youth Group. This was started up by Community Centre volunteers this year and, owing to its popularity with young people, required additional staff/volunteers. The Project has been supported by the project team through the draft community led youth group model, which includes guidance on health and safety, safeguarding for children and young people, how to run a youth group etc. The Northfield group is a lot less structured and is more of a drop-in than the other 2 groups, which have a programme of activities decided by the participants themselves.

4.16 During 2019 there were 3 registered participants from Northfield taking part in ACC youth work community-based activities. In 2022, there were 43, a 1333% increase.



4.17 Young people taking part in the Northfield group said the same as those in Mastrick and Kincorth: it was a chance to hang out with friends, make new friends and take part in fun activities.

4.18 Given the success of this first test of the volunteer led youth group model, the model will be launched and promoted across all communities with information sessions held. Once interest has been received and groups beginning to develop a volunteer led youth activity network, like the food growing and community run green space networks developed by projects 15.1 and 15.2 will be developed.

5 HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

- 5.1 Staffing resources will continue to be allocated to Kincorth and Mastrick as it has been proven that there is a need in the community for this type of provision and that young people benefit from and value it.
- 5.2 The volunteer led group in Northfield will be supported through the new volunteer led community group model and we will use the learning from this Group to further refine and develop the Model as it is launched. To ensure sustainability of youth groups, the new volunteer led youth group model and developing the capacity of communities to run youth activities for themselves will be key. The youth work team, through the model, will offer support to volunteers to give them the knowledge and skills they will need to run safe and effective groups. Once interest has been received and groups beginning to develop a volunteer led youth activity network, like the food growing and community run green space networks developed by projects 15.1 and 15.2 will be developed.

6 HOW WILL WE MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

- 6.1 The ACC Youth Work team will oversee the development and management of the group. Data from the management information system used by the Community Learning and Development team will track numbers, and regular evaluation by youth workers will ensure that high standards are kept up and the needs of young people are being met.
- 6.2 Should it be agreed that the project is ended, the data recorded will continue to be monitored and reported to the Children's Services Board, as well as added to the Outcomes Framework/Improvement programme Dashboard to ensure that performance continues.

7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

- 7.1 The popularity of the groups shows that even in the age of social media children and young people have a need to play and socialise in person. They need opportunities out-with school to form friendships, connect with peers and have an outlet for their energies. Groups such as the ones at Kincorth and Mastrick allow positive relationships to grow between children, young people and adults. These adults, usually youth workers, but also local volunteers, can provide guidance and mentorship at a crucial stage of a child and young person's life. For this we need a skilled and well-trained workforce of youth workers, mentors, volunteers, coaches etc.
- 7.2 Given the outcomes above there is opportunity to scale up to enable there to be greater levels of youth community activity across the city. In order to achieve this, the model of volunteer led community activities will be launched and spread across the city.
- 7.3 Youth anti social behaviour has been identified as a continuing priority within the revised Children's Services Plan 2023-2026. The spreading of the volunteer

led youth group model will support the proposed multi-agency improvement aim “Reduce by 15% the number of instances of youth anti-social behaviour calls to Police Scotland by 2025.” Ensuring sustainable youth community activities is a key part to supporting the reduction in youth anti-social behaviour and as well as spreading the volunteer led model to support this reduction, new innovative ways to engage with and increase participation of children and young people will be developed and tested as part of the aforementioned aim proposed under Stretch Outcome 8.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Board:

- i) Agree that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is brought to an end on the basis that the aim has been surpassed and the opportunities to scale up are being progressed and the impact will be monitored through proposed multi-agency improvement aim “Reduce by 15% the number of instances of youth anti-social behaviour calls to Police Scotland by 2025.” within the revised Children’s Services Plan 2023-26; and
- ii) Note that the dataset for the overall aim will continue to be reported via the Improvement Programme dashboard to ensure progress is monitored.

Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities

- To build a network of volunteers across the city who take responsibility for running community-based youth activities.
- To learn from the success of the Kincorth pilot and build on what worked.
- To build an early intervention model of youth work provision that focuses on areas with highest need and focuses on 10 years and above.

Risks

- Not having the capacity to offer support across the city to volunteers.
- There is not enough capacity in the youth work team to provide community-based groups across the whole city. Concentrating on areas with the highest need will inevitably mean some communities will not be provided for and may feel left out. This will hopefully be alleviated if we can build a volunteer network.

Consultation

Stretch Outcome 9 Sub Group and Children’s Services Board
CPA Management Group

Background Papers

The following papers were used in the preparation of this report.

- LOIP 2026-26
- 9.2 Project Charter
- [impact-of-community-based-universal-youth-work-in-scotland-november-2018.pdf \(youthlinkscotland.org\)](#)

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