

7 May 2009

## Gateshead Council:

### 'Way out in Gateshead' Case Study

#### Summary of policy/project

Way out in Gateshead (WinG) trains young people to become voluntary instructors in outdoor settings - contributing to all five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes.

however to our knowledge there are no other areas that offers a group of young volunteers.

#### What problems does the policy/project solve?

#### Description

Wayout in Gateshead is a charity working in the NE of England. It develops young people in Gateshead using outdoor education; it is managed and run by volunteers and staff from Gateshead Council. Young people are targeted, particularly those that rarely get the opportunity of training.

The most obvious benefit of this project is the contribution towards all of the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. The Government's aims for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

*Be healthy* by partaking in regular outdoor activity.

*Stay Safe* by getting young people involved in something they have an interest in giving them a focus and enabling them to take part in positive and productive activities in a safe environment.

*Enjoy and Achieve* by taking part in these activities they have selected to do while gaining qualifications, valuable leadership skills and increasing confidence to achieve.

The young people taking part in the activities enquired whether they could become volunteers for this charity and set up a group while training for qualifications. Staff in Gateshead Council expressed a view that this would be beneficial and it became apparent that staff involvement in this would assist in achieving many of Gateshead Council's priorities.

*Make a positive contribution* by engaging young people in positive activity that they wouldn't normally have the chance to be involved in. The voluntary work they are undertaking makes a positive contribution to the community they live in.

Taster sessions were held to establish the feasibility of the project and popularity, it proved to be very successful so was made permanent.

*Achieve economic well-being* by learning valuable employable skills and gaining qualifications the young people involved will be more likely to have a positive future utilising the skills gained.

#### Has the idea worked elsewhere?

Many different areas have young volunteers,

This project also contributes towards Vision 2030 – Gateshead's Sustainable Community Strategy. In particular the 'Big ideas' of Gateshead Volunteers and Active and Healthy Gateshead. The project helps create a healthy community providing opportunities and encouragement for all,

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whilst enabling young people to make a fully trained in all activities. recognised contribution to their community through volunteering.

The training the young volunteers receive gives them many transferable skills for employment; this includes health and safety training, first aid, diversity training, equal opportunities and risk assessing.

#### What is the evidence of success?

The young people involved in the programme attend voluntarily and enjoy being involved; this is good evidence of success.

#### What were the difficulties of implementation?

Difficulties were experienced when keeping up to date with the constantly changing criteria set by National Governing Bodies.

Due to an adult volunteer shortage the project had to come to an end in October 2008, however the interest of the young people was never lost and the project re-commenced in March 2009. Now the project is up and running again there is no shortage of young people putting themselves forward as volunteers.

There is also the issue of becoming a fully qualified instructor as this is not allowed until 18 years of age, when many of the young volunteers are fully competent before this age.

Many of the young people have used the experience and qualifications to gain employment in this area of work; one previous young volunteer is now a ski instructor in Switzerland.

There are sometimes too many expectations on younger volunteers even though they have many other commitments e.g. school work, this must be closely monitored to ensure an even balance is maintained.

#### Would this work in other Councils?

There are no reasons this would not work in other councils. As long as the correct resource is available and the funding and commitment is there.

#### What is the cost of implementation?

When the project was first set up £6000 was used to purchase the essential equipment for outdoor activity and to ensure all of the instructors were

#### What advice would you give any Councils wishing to adopt this idea?

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When thinking about how to engage young people to get them involved, try out all possible activities and then accept the views of the young people, they will select the appropriate activities.

To keep interest going ensure there are plenty of choices on offer, be willing to accept other peoples ideas and evolve with the changing times and trends.

It is important that National Governing Bodies guidelines are followed and that you are kept up to date at all times.

It is extremely important that all staff are fully trained and qualified to be instructors before they start delivering sessions.

#### **For more information**

Contact Chris Nevis, Head of Children and Young People's Services, Learning and Children in Gateshead Council

To find out more about the work of Localis or to discuss possible membership opportunities, please visit our website at [www.localis.org.uk](http://www.localis.org.uk) or phone 0207 3402660