



An evaluation of the 'Positive Futures Programme'

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Dr Neil Davidson & Dr Liz Frondigoun
Glasgow Caledonian University

The Scottish Institute
for **Policing Research**

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 This research was commissioned by Inverclyde Council to evaluate their Positive Futures Programme (PFP). Within Inverclyde, youth unemployment, anti-social behaviour, vandalism, youth disorder and underage drinking were identified as being a concern within specific local community areas¹. Inverclyde is also identified as being one of the most deprived areas in Scotland. The 2009 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) shows that 45% of datazones in Inverclyde are in the 20% most deprived quintiles and there are increasing numbers of datazones in the 5%, 10% and 15% most deprived. According to the SIMD Inverclyde has the second highest percentage of employment deprived people in Scotland. Furthermore, the Scottish indicates that 21% of the population of Inverclyde are income deprived compared to the national average of 16%. It is in this context that the PFP has emerged.

1.2 The programme was developed by Inverclyde Council's youth workers to provide a range of early intervention and diversionary programmes and activities for young people – aged 15 to 17 years of age – who are at risk of becoming or are disengaged from the education system and other youth orientated services. The programme is part of Inverclyde Council's Safer and Inclusive Communities project and has evolved from, and in conjunction with, other similar programmes, including Guardian Angels and New Horizons.

1.3 The aim of the PFP is to work with disengaged young people who have chaotic lifestyles and to provide them with alternative forms of education and opportunities. A range of 'taster'² workshops, fitness sessions, and personal development classes are provided to develop self-esteem, team building and communication skills, and physical and mental well-being. The programme is tailored to each young person involved in the programme and to accommodate their individual needs.

1.4 The programme runs for 16 weeks twice a year. Young people are referred to the programme predominately via the education system as part of a Flexible Learning Package (FLPs) but can also be referred through social services. Once referred, young people attend anything from one day a week to five days a week, according to their specific needs. Many of them are known to the staff and have already been in contact with other agencies in the area.

1.5 The desired outcomes for the young people are a return to the education system, a reduction in offending and anti-social behaviour, and the promotion of good citizenship. As well as these, the young people are encouraged to participate in workshops and activities that will provide

¹ <http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/community-planning/inverclyde-alliance-single-outcome-agreement/social-regeneration-and-area-renewal/social-regeneration-area-renewal-case-study-one/?pg=1>

² These are 'taster' workshops in the sense that they offer basic entry level training to various vocations in order to help young people discover what they are interested in doing.

them with a level of accreditation that may assist them in securing future employment or signpost them to other agencies to continue their development and improve their life chances.

1.6 This programme is consistent with the current Scottish Government's strategies More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) (2006) and Get It Right for Every Child (GIRfEC) (2008). MCMC's overall objective is to "*eradicate the problem of NEET [not in education, employment or training]*" amongst young people and in order to do so "*demand action from a range of agencies in every local authority area in the country*" (ibid:1). GIRfEC is a guide relevant to all those involved or working with children and young people who need to be aware how the approach can "*have a positive impact for all children and young people*" so that they can be "*successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens*" (ibid:2).

1.7 This evaluation has sought to critically assess the following:

- The impact of the programme on the young people;
- Examples of effective/good practice;
- What, if anything, could be improved, added to or removed from the programme in the future;
- Next steps and recommendations.

1.8 The report is presented in the following structure: Chapter Two describes the methodology of the research; Chapter Three, in the form of a brief review of the relevant youth policy, identifies some of the key academic documents, policy debates at the national and local scale, and outlines a brief history of related youth orientated initiatives in Inverclyde; Chapter Four provides an overview of the Positive Futures programme by outlining its structure, main aims, objectives, implementation and desired outcomes; in Chapter Five the links and value of the work of the PFP to the education sector are reviewed, primarily through the perspective of those working in education; Chapter Six consists of the views of the young people who currently attend the PFP and some of the workers of external agencies who contribute to the PFP; and Chapter Seven draws conclusions and makes recommendations for moving forward.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Introduction

2.1 There were three stages to this qualitative research project. Stage One involved a brief review of the relevant literature in Scotland. In Stage Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with people involved in the organizing, managing and running of the programme. Stage Three consisted of focus groups with those involved in the referral process of young people and the young people who participated in the programme.

2.2 The timescale for the research was two months. Table 1 outlines how this time was divided:

Table 1: Timetable of research

March 2012	Review of relevant documents. Short Literature Review. Focus Groups and Interviews.
April 2012	Analysis and write up.

Stage One: Literature Review

2.3 A brief literature review of relevant policy documents, published research, and other documents was conducted. It provides a backdrop against which the PFP has emerged within a local and national scale. The review also highlights emerging trends within the literature relevant to the research issue. The review also informed some of the key themes around which the research methods utilized in Stage Two and Three were shaped.

Stages Two and Three: Semi-structured interviews & focus groups

2.4 Qualitative research provides a unique tool for studying what lies behind or underpins behaviour and attitudes, and for studying the dynamics that affect outcomes of policy. Carrying out fieldwork in a variety of ways leads to interaction at different levels between the researcher and the participants. Therefore, what is found is not 'sweeping generalisations but deeply contextualised meanings of the participant's experiences'³. This enhances understanding and counterbalances the

³ Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994).

concerns that quantitative research often leaves many questions essential to the evaluation and development of social policy misconceived or inadequately understood⁴.

2.5 Six in-depth, face-to-face, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted over a five week period (see appendix 1 for interview schedule example). One phone interview was also conducted. These interviews were conducted with individuals who were involved with the delivers of PFP at the strategic and programme level.

2.6 The final stage of the fieldwork consisted of three focus groups: one with 3 key individuals from the education system where the majority of the referrals to the PFP originate. All six senior schools in the area and invited to participate via email, but only three accepted this invitation⁵. The participants of the other two focus groups were made up of young people (seventeen in total) who had been referred to and were currently on the programme. These participants were invited to participate in a focus group 'in situ' (i.e. where the programme's activities were taking place). Participation was not mandatory and no incentive was offered. Participants in all focus groups were informed that they would have complete anonymity.

2.7 All interviews and focus groups were recorded with the permission of the participants. All transcriptions were carried out by an external professional transcription service.

⁴ Richie & Lewis (2003).

⁵ The education sector focus group comprised representatives from Port Glasgow High School, Inverclyde Academy, and St Stephens High school. St. Columbus and Notre Dame High schools were approached but declined to participate, Clyde View school participant was unable to attend.

Chapter Three: Literature review

3.1 This chapter examines a range of literature, including policy documentation, academic and other research reports. The review focuses on the policies and development of services to support disengaged youths.

Youth justice

3.2 In Scotland, there is a unified welfare-based youth justice system, committed to the prevention of harm to children, including children who offend and children deemed to be in social jeopardy. This is distinct from the rest of the UK in that it separates functions between the courts as factual and legal arbiters and children's hearings as treatment tribunals, as well as having a lower minimum and maximum age of criminal responsibility of eight to sixteen. At sixteen young people are of an age that is roughly equivalent to the end of compulsory schooling. Youth crime and justice is a particularly active area of research in Scotland, and includes a number of pioneering self-report studies (Anderson, et al. 1990) such as; comparative analysis of youth justice (Bottoms and Dignan, 2004); and critical analysis of contemporary youth justice policy and practice (Piacentini and Walters, 2006). An important theme in recent Scottish research has also been youth to adult criminal justice transitions, much of which has *"highlighted the extreme vulnerability of youngsters who make that transition"* (McAra, 2008:496). For example, the large-scale longitudinal study 'Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime' (McAra and McVie, 2007), found that the *most* vulnerable offenders known to the hearing system at age 15 (those with the highest volume of officially recorded need and those with a history of school exclusion) have the highest risk of later criminal conviction and custodial sentence.

Youth services

3.3 Historically one of the core purposes of youth work was to achieve the *'salvation'* of the children *'from the vices of their parent culture'* (Blanch, 1979, cited in Smith, 1988:12). This portrayal of youths as being a problem within communities has been doggedly persistent over time, and as policing agencies seek to alleviate the growing fear of crime via a 'reassurance agenda', the activities of children are becoming increasingly monitored and restricted. In 2005 the Scottish Executive stated that this situation had arisen *"not surprisingly, since, by any measure, they contribute disproportionately to the crime rate"* (ibid: 10). Fyfe (2010) notes that these tensions have dominated the resulting policy and practice response and that it is *"now commonplace for youth work practitioners to be engaged in projects concerned with managing and modifying the perceived risky and deviant behaviour of today's youth... Moreover, service provision has become closely allied to available funding that mirrors political priorities; dictating a major shift in service provision"* (ibid: 78).

3.4 However, Percy-Smith (2005:1-13) has argued that since 1997 issues in relation to well-being of children and young people have moved higher up the political agenda with a growing recognition of the need for innovative approaches to the delivery of services that cross traditional service and professional boundaries. They also demonstrate how better joining-up of policy and services has been a key theme running through recent policy developments in relation to children and young people in the UK in general.

3.5 Thus, general attitudes towards young people in Scotland appear to be largely characterised by a tension between these anxieties about their behaviours and a compassion for their well-being (Scottish Government, 2008).

3.6 Against this backdrop youth workers have continued to strive to achieve the goal of social, personal and political development of young people (Merton and Wylie, 2004). This has traditionally taken the form of informal learning as one of the principal methods of working with young people, often making it their *raison d'être* (Stanton, 2004). This entails blending potential learning outcomes into activities which young people are voluntarily engaged in and which they find interesting, relevant and fun (Fyfe, 2010). Learning in youth work is therefore often informal, experiential and reflexive; delivered through participation in creative and stimulating activities, to provide a range of opportunities and experiences for young people.

The education sector

3.7 Closely linked to policies regarding youth services have been the changes in the past 10 years to the education sector in Scotland. Foremost was the new Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) that was introduced in 2004 by the Scottish Executive to radically overhaul the purpose and delivery of education in Scotland, placing the young person at the centre of the curriculum. An array of measures were introduced to enable all young people, aged from 3 – 18 years, to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to ultimately achieve positive outcomes on leaving school. In order to achieve this, the curriculum has to be as flexible and personalised enough to provide for the full spectrum of needs and abilities for young people, whether they be in school or out. The new curriculum also includes more focus on vocational and 'skills-for-work' options of young people whose needs are better suited to such options. The provision of such options may, at times, be best met out with the school setting however it must be ensured that;

“learning opportunities, wherever they take place, are of the highest possible quality, considered an integrated part of mainstream education and effectively linked to schools, associated with appropriate support for pupils, and that learning and achievement is accredited or formally recognised. Interruptions to learning for vulnerable or disaffected pupils may lead to disengagement. Education authorities must ensure that they have provision available for pupils who need short-term support to continue learning while excluded from school, and that pupils removed from the register are placed promptly in

a suitable school or other provision, to reduce the difficulties associated with reintegration and lost progress”

(Scottish Executive, 2006:17).

The aim of the CfE is, therefore, to help prepare young people in Scotland to take their place in a modern society and economy. Therefore, the CfE is about more than just the content of the curriculum, and extends well beyond schools.

3.8 **More Choices, More Chances**

In 2006 the then Scottish Executive published the strategy More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) which was designed to tackle the issue of those young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Those young people in NEET for prolonged periods of time were identified as being most likely to encounter persistent problems of worklessness and social exclusion in later life, creating an “unacceptable waste of potential” of young people and a financial burden for society: *“NEET sells young people short; economically and socially it makes no sense”* (ibid:1). The key aims of MCMC are: stem the flows into NEET – prevention rather than cure; have a system-wide (pre and post 16) focus on, ambitions for, ownership of – and accountability for – the NEET group; prioritise education and training outcomes for the NEET group as a step towards lifelong employability, given their low attainment profile; position NEET reduction as one of the key indicators for measuring the pre and post 16 systems’ success.

3.9 Like the CfE, the aims of MCMC extend beyond the education sector and include a myriad of other agencies with similar concerns for these social groups (e.g. police, social workers, youth workers). There is a strong focus on preventing young people from becoming NEET in the first instance. As such, a significant part of the strategy is focussed on pre-16 age group i.e. *‘prevention rather than cure’*. For those already NEET the strategy prioritises education and training as a step toward lifelong employability, given their low attainment profile. The links between deprivation and NEET is appreciated as being a major factor in why young people may be disengaged. Part of the challenge for the strategy is delivering the benefits of its policies to all young people, including those who are the most disengaged.

3.10 **Flexible Learning Packages**

To address the extremely varied needs of those requiring MCMC, schools need to work together with numerous partner organisations. One of the main tools used to address this is Flexible Learning Packages (FLPs) where a young person of school age may attend another programme, course or vocation instead of school if it is decided that this person would benefit more in a non-school environment. FLPs can be created to meet the specific needs of the individual and include a blend of educational and vocational activities provided by various agencies. Lowden et al. (2006) reviewed several diverse case studies of FLPs for those requiring MCMC. They found that good practice in provision for those requiring MCMC is when it is characterised by being:

“learner-centred, accessible, participative, engaging, flexible, relevant and credible to young people. It addresses core personal and social competencies and promotes self-

esteem and aspirations. It is responsive to the views of young people and involves them in the design of approaches and the setting of targets. It is able to offer appropriate assessment to recognise learners' achievements and provide nationally recognised qualifications to provide credible accreditation for young people"

(ibid: 48).

3.11 **Get It Right for Every Child**

In 2008, the Scottish Government published *A Guide to 'Get It Right for Every Child'* (GIRfEC) which provided a framework for all those who work with children and is intended to be used alongside the CfE to support services to come together at a local level to deliver a personalised, effective response for each young person. It builds on research and practice evidence to help practitioners to improve outcomes for children and young people so that they can grow, develop and reach their full potential. GIRfEC ties into existing policy, strategy and legislation affecting children and young people and families but seeks to create a *"positive shift in culture, systems and practice across services"* (ibid: 6) that are underpinned by common values and principles which apply to all aspects of working with children and young people. The GIRfEC framework states that all values and principles are relevant at all times but are particularly pertinent when working in a multi-agency environment.

Inverclyde's Single Outcome Agreement

3.12 In November of 2007, the national and local governments signed a concordat that committed both to establishing Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) for all 32 Scotland's councils and extending these to Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). This represented a shared ambition to see Scotland's *public, private and voluntary* sectors working together to improve the quality of life and opportunities in life for people in Scotland. A SOA is the means by which;

"Community Planning Partnerships agree their strategic priorities their local area and express those priorities as outcomes to be delivered by the partners, either individually or jointly, while showing how those outcomes should contribute to the Scottish Government's relevant National Outcome"

(Scottish Government, 2008a:5).

3.13 The purpose of the SOA is to map out and describe how both the Scottish Government and CPPs will collaborate and work towards improving national outcomes for local people in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities.

3.14 Largely as a result of a legacy of de-industrialisation, Inverclyde has worklessness and low skill levels well above the national average, the effects of which are evident in many communities

across the area. Indeed, the MCMC identifies Inverclyde as one of seven⁶ hotspot areas where NEET is a particular challenge. The SOA in Inverclyde has been shaped accordingly to address these issues:

“The size, scale and range of challenges that confront the area are significant. The legacy of de-industrialisation continues to affect Inverclyde and we are working hard to address these complex challenges. The purpose of this SOA is to accelerate the pace of change in actively managing these challenges”

(Inverclyde Alliance, 2009:27).

Thus, the desired outcomes of the Inverclyde SOA are to: stabilise and diversify the population; make communities stronger; develop skills in the labour market to increase economic activity in the area; improve health of the population; promote a positive culture change towards alcohol; provide the best start for all young people; increase the attractiveness of the physical environment.

3.15 Inverclyde Initiative

The Inverclyde Initiative was run by Inverclyde Sub-division in the Greenock area which had been identified as having significant youth disorder problems, including that of gang activity but more generally a problem with on-street disorder characterised by under-age drinking and a knife-carrying culture. The Inverclyde Initiative was focused on addressing the problem of groups of youths deemed to be ‘at risk’ and the associated issues of ‘child protection’, which aimed to raise parents’ awareness of the activities their children are involved in; challenge youths’ behaviour patterns; educate them to the dangers they are placing themselves and others in by pursuing such activities; provide them with information and opportunities to encourage them to adopt positive life choices; and inform on community opportunities to reduce the likelihood of re-offending. Strathclyde Police developed the Initiative in accordance with ACPOS’ Public Reassurance Strategy and delivered it in conjunction with their Community Planning partners through a multi-agency approach following the ethos for Community Planning and the Single Outcome Agreement. This included partnership working with, for example, James Watt College, Council, Education, Health, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue and others (see Frondigoun and Addidle, 2009, for review of the Inverclyde Initiative).

3.16 Guardian Angels and New Horizons

The Inverclyde Initiative also ran in conjunction with other initiatives specifically designed as a follow-up to catch the most-at-risk young people brought into the Inverclyde Initiative. Details of all referrals from the Inverclyde Initiative were passed to Inverclyde Council’s Safer Communities who run diversionary and behavioural change initiatives.

3.17 Operation Guardian Angel was operated by the Social Protection Team and involves Strathclyde Police, NHS, Inverclyde Council’s Community Learning and Development team and Inverclyde Leisure. Its aim is to provide a sustainable programme that has structure and fluency,

⁶ The other six hotspot areas where NEET is identified as being particularly pronounced are; Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire and Dundee.

which addresses behaviour of young people in Inverclyde. The programme's objective was to focus on alcohol-related crime throughout the festive season by providing educational workshops and diversionary activities designed to address anti-social behaviour, educate and inform, and provide an insight into, and taster of, activities and opportunities available within Inverclyde. The programme ran from 1900hrs to 2200hrs and took place in various locations throughout Inverclyde for selected young people who had been removed from the streets during the Inverclyde Initiative and who were subsequently invited to attend the Guardian Angel programme (see appendix 2 for Guardian Angel programme).

3.18 The New Horizons programme ran for two weeks, was aimed at 12 to 14 year olds and provided a mixture of educational, vocational, and physical and fun activities. It is funded by the council and run by the street mediators and has now been extended to run in 16 week blocks.

Chapter Four: The Positive Futures Programme

4.1 The youth based services in Inverclyde described in Chapter Three were largely well received and address many pressing issues in the area; however gaps in the services being provided were identified particularly the lack of any long-term fully funded strategy that offered a multi-agency educational and socially supportive package. Foremost was the lack of intervention services for the older age groups, primarily the 15 to 17 year olds. Many of these young people were already known to the local authorities, having come into contact with various other local social, health, education or criminal justice services. This age group also represents those eligible to leave school without obtaining any form of qualifications and many of them were described as being *“on the cusp of entering the criminal justice system”* (PFP2). Recognising that locally there was a gap in youth service provision to meet the needs of local young people a funding application was made to the council to develop such a long term alternative, the result of which was the PFP.

4.2 The initial PFP ran for six weeks and was primarily based upon providing sports activities (football). This activity was chosen as it allowed youth workers to *“get the youths involved, get them in for a certain time, get them kind of disciplined in a sense... almost a gateway to get in to deal with attitudes, team working and also give them some exercise, and we also see it as a fun kind of activity”* (Council Employee). However, it was recognised that a more diverse programme featuring a blend of fun activities such as football with educational and vocational workshops and sessions, which some of the young people could gain qualifications and/or accreditation from, would be more beneficial. The need for longer-term engagement was also identified as being necessary in order to have an influence on engrained attitudes and behaviour patterns of many of the young people. In dialogue with the education sector, a longer programme of 16 weeks was created specifically to fall in-line with school term times. This length of time was described as *“not an incredible length, but...quite a lot for the young people that we’re working with to commit to”* (PFP2). Once the content of the programme and the courses had been refined the education sector were offered the programme and asked if they thought *“this was a good idea and were the types of things in it good?”* we were also visited by the Positive Futures Programme Manager who also *‘provided all the backup material’* (School representative 1).

4.3 The PFP has a strong emphasis on being sensitive to the needs of the individual and tailoring their service provision accordingly. It is recognised by the staff that these young people have experienced problems (e.g. deprivation, chaotic lifestyles, and family issues) as opposed to being a problem themselves. There is the belief that these young people are not predisposed to behavioural issues and that they are in need of the appropriate care and support to be helped to make positive changes. The PFP was developed specifically to provide an important part of the support that these young people need.

4.4 It is also important for the staff to have perseverance and tolerance towards some of the more challenging young people as the programme is potentially one of the last opportunities for

some of these young people who are at a particularly critical stage of their personal development and lives:

“Just keep the calm situation cause all these young people have had previously is adults in their life, ‘don’t do that’ ‘you’re this/you’re that’ everybody’s shouting at them...They’ll say ‘shut up ye fat bastard’ and things like that, that’s just run of the mill, you know. Whereas in school, I think they’d be severely punished for speaking to a teacher like that... I mean, if they said something nice to me I’d probably collapse on the floor, I get called absolutely everything there is to be called, but d’you know what, that’s just the way it is. That’s their way of communicating”

(PFP2, shift-worker and PFP1).

4.5 It was believed that the PFP was a more suitable environment for these young people because of the level of training and experience of the PFP staff in dealing with such situations. The lower ratio of staff to young people compared to schools was also believed to provide the necessary levels of support needed:

“As individuals, their needs are probably met greater in a place like this because in a big school the one-to-one that’s needed with them just isn’t there, plus the difficulties in their nature and how they present themselves is always or can always be a problem. We’re used to working with young people like that ‘cause we don’t know any different, we’ve always worked with young people who are problematic or through their behaviour or how they present or are difficult in certain ways”

(PFP1).

4.6 Those on the course are split between those who will return to full-time education once they have completed the PFP and those who on completion of the programme will be of an age that means they have technically left school. If it is deemed appropriate by the PFP staff and those in the education system, a young person can return to the PFP for another 16 week period 2 days a week while they attend school for the other three days. For those young people not returning to education the ultimate goal is to provide a ‘positive future’ beyond the PFP. As one staff member put it; *“we want to prevent them from ‘falling off the edge”* i.e. becoming NEET. They continued:

“We’re looking for a final destination, final positive destination for them. So we’re looking to either try and get them onto another project it... work experience, college, even back to school if there’s a possibility that they could maybe attain some more qualifications or into one of the training schemes. We don’t want them to just fall down the radar and if that’s going to happen we’ll be saying ‘come back until we do find somewhere for you to go”

(PFP2).

The staff

4.7 In total, there are six staff; two full-time staff who work 9am till 5pm and two alternative shifts of two staff who work four days on, four days off, 11am till 5pm, as part of their wider remit as youth workers in the area. Because of the small number of staff the distinction between management and shift-workers is frequently blurred and roles are often poorly defined i.e. 'everyone does a bit of everything'.

4.8 The full-time line-manager oversees the overall running of the programme and is heavily involved in all aspects of the management, administration, and also the day-to-day aspects. This diverse role includes: conducting visits to schools or homes to meet each individual young person who is to be included in the programme; securing funding and facilities; attending council meetings and conferences; monitoring, assessing and logging the needs and progress of each young person and; cooking lunch; approaching and recruiting outside agencies to conduct workshops and provide activities for the programme.

4.9 The other full-time employee, although involved in aspects of the management of the programme and facilitating the job of the line-manager, is more involved in the day-to-day running of the programme. This post however, is not a full time permanent post and the funding for it runs out at the completion of the current 16 week programme. It is hoped that the funding for this post will be extended as it has been previously⁷ but at the time of writing this is not certain.

4.10 The shift workers are part of the Social Protection Team. Originally they worked solely as street mediators and were involved in working with young people in their local communities; particularly those communities where youth anti-social behaviour had been identified as problematic. They are now linked into and run the diversionary/educational programmes offered by the PFP. On the programme they assist in the day-to-day running of the programme and deliver practical workshops such as plastering, bricklaying, basic car maintenance, etc. As well as this, they run the Street Football at the weekend and evenings, the PODs⁸, school programmes and other youth orientated multi-agency initiatives, particularly during the school holidays which can help to provide some continuity for the young people on the programme when they are out of school. There is also one member of staff who is funded by the Future Jobs Fund⁹; however this position is only temporary for six months.

4.11 It is strongly emphasised that the current number of staff employed to deliver the programme is felt to be the minimum number required to continue to maintain the quality of the

⁷ This post was extended by securing additional funding from the Strathclyde Fire and Rescue fund.

⁸ PODs are 40-foot metal storage containers that are placed in areas where anti-social behaviour and youth disorder has identified. They contain various internal facilities (heating, lighting, cooking facilities, tables and chairs) and are used as locations for holding or staging assorted activities (fly-tying, fishing, arts and crafts, make-up workshops, photography, cooking, and jewellery making) during the evenings.

⁹ Visit <http://www.scvo.org.uk/training-employability/future-jobs-fund/> for more information on the Future Job Fund.

programme and in order to provide an adequate level of supervision in line with Health and Safety risk assessments as well as meeting the diverse needs of the young people: *“staffing is really a big issue because there’s times when you’ve got maybe one or two individuals who take up all your time. They can be quite absorbent of staff time”* (PFP1).

4.12 Consequently, it is argued that it is imperative that funding be secured to support the current staff levels including both full time employees – without this commitment the programme could be in jeopardy and would be likely to be discontinued.

The referral system

4.13 The young people are mostly referred via the education system or, occasionally, social services. The referral process begins prior to the commencement of each of the 16 week blocks when schools are asked to identify which (if any) pupils they believe are suitable for the programme: *“We’re asked if we think we have clientele who would benefit from the use of it... we get information from the team to say that the programme’s starting and it’s going to be running at a certain time and identify pupil candidates for the programme”* (Schools representatives 1 and 3).

4.14 Basic personal information (name, age, home address, contact details) is passed on to the PFP team. Additional information brought to the attention of the PFP manager regarding any historical or current issues a young person on the programme may be experiencing is passed on to the PFP staff at team meetings. This additional information is seen as being particularly pertinent as it allows PFP staff to assess each young person’s individual needs and tailor their services accordingly. For example: *“if one of the young people’s mother and father are split up, that’s kind of important for us to know – not so that we can mention to them, but so that if he’s acting a wee bit kind of out of sorts, we can kind of keep a bit of an eye on him and be a bit more understanding”* (PFP1). A significant number of the young people referred to the PFP are already well known to the staff from their time working with other youth orientated programmes in the area.

4.15 This personal information about the young people is also important from the health and safety perspective of the staff, other young people on the programme and the young person him/herself. For example:

“One of the boys who was on the programme had been charged with rape, he’d quite a lot of serious offending and that was something that we had to take on board because obviously we’re open to male and female...A lot of the young people do have a cannabis issue, problems going on, some of them maybe a borderline case (in relation to their drug consumption) when they present themselves in the morning, the staff will make that decision. If we feel that there’s an issue there, they’re taken home”

(PFP1).

4.16 The dialogue and communication between the PFP management and the education sector has improved over time: *“we’re now part of the educational service in Inverclyde or the Directorate, so we have far better links with education now in the last couple of years than what we had previously...The information that we’re getting is getting better. The relationship between social work and Education is getting more fluent now, I think there’s a bit more confidence in us and in what we’re doing”* (PFP1, PFP2). However, there is recognition for the need to continue this trend of increased dialogue and information exchange. For example, previously a lack of sufficient information from the education sector to the PFP staff created issues:

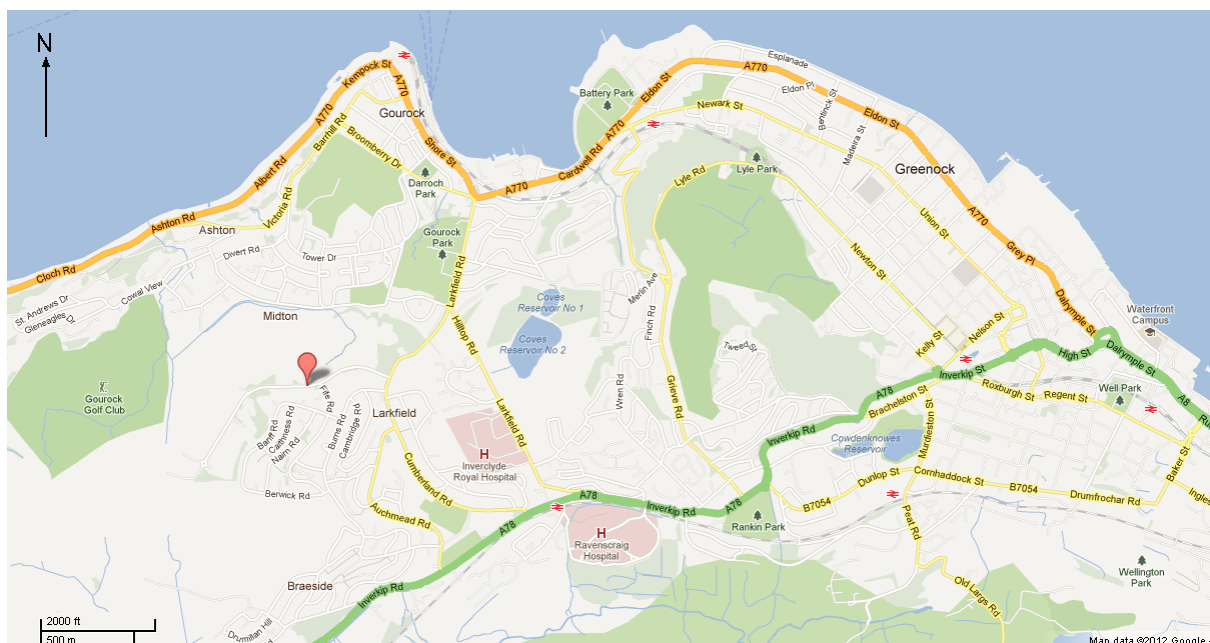
“I think there was a bit of hesitancy in the past from Education... for example...one of the boys who did a runner on I think it was Friday. He has... it says here [referral report card] ‘he’s not engaged in school despite having an amended timetable, so he’s basically completely disengaged. He’ll co-operate on a one to one basis but he’s had several exclusions and is a real problem’. But what they didn’t add into that was his literacy is really minimal and a lot of his behaviour stems from... if you put him into a workshop where there’s going to be any form of literacy, he’ll act up, but we found that out ourselves. Now I would think that that was something that would be pretty important to put in, but they maybe don’t think”

(PFP1).

The facility

4.17 The building that houses the programme is a warehouse on the outskirts of Gourock, west of the town centre:

Map 1: Gourock




Key:  Location of Positive Futures facility

Photo 1: Exterior of Positive Futures facility



The venue is provided free by the council as currently is it now being used. However should a business wish to pay rent on the property then the programme would have to relocate. Annual running costs (e.g. utility bills, mini-van, sustenance, wages for external visiting agencies, etc.), not including staff, are drawn from a £25,000 budget which is sourced from Inverclyde Council's 'Community Safety Fund'.

4.18 Some of the facilities available inside the open-plan section of the building include: tables and chairs; a pool table; a car and hydraulic car lift; lifting weights; running machine; punch bag; cooking facilities; and basic masonry equipment. The building also contains an office, a smaller room for holding workshops and group activities, and toilet facilities.

Photo 2: Interior of Positive Futures facility (main activity hall)



The routine

4.19 The programme attendees are picked up from their place of residence in the morning. Pickups begin at 10am and generally take approximately an hour. Free transportation to the programme is seen as being a key way of encouraging attendance to the programme:

“When a young person’s disengaged they look for any excuse not to turn up. There’s a better chance if I’m chapping on their door or there’s a minibus sitting outside that they’ll actually get out their kip [bed]”

(PFP2).

Providing transportation is also seen as being a way to negate territorial issues that many of the young people experience when leaving the vicinity of their local neighbourhoods.

4.20 Upon arrival warm and cold drinks, toast and biscuits are offered. At lunchtime a selection of breads (white bread, rolls, panini, tortillas), meat and vegetable fillings, and cakes are offered. Throughout the course of the day the young people remain in the care of the staff and are not allowed to leave the premises without permission. At the end of the day (3pm) the young people are returned to their place of residence in the shuttle bus.

4.21 To ensure that any progress or issues arising are passed from one shift to the other, there is a 'hand-over' procedure where collated information on the young people is passed between the shift workers. This takes the form of written notes in a logbook and on a white board, and formal meetings. These meetings are also used as an opportunity for the staff to self-evaluate aspects of the programme which are deemed to be working or not and provide a forum for discussion between the members of staff:

"It's important for the staff to sit down and discuss things; 'I could've dealt with this/could've dealt with that', there's a whole spectrum of improvement, and I think I'm a big advocate of that. I think to sit down and promote in-house how we are, how do we better ourselves, how do we make things better, how do we deal with situations... all these things are important"

(PFP2).

The activities

4.22 The programme now offers a mixture of vocational workshops, educational courses, and entertainment activities (see Appendix 4 for PFP programme). These activities and workshops frequently run in parallel with each other to break the core group (12 young people on average) into smaller subgroups e.g. car maintenance will run during the same time slot that a holistic medicine course is being offered. These subgroups operate in different locations within the building (i.e. in either the main hall or the upstairs room). The young people are strongly encouraged to participate in these activities but are not forced to do so. They are allowed to 'sit in' on an activity without actually engaging provided they are not disruptive...

4.23 Some of the workshops run by the programme staff members include:

"We show them basic mechanics which is only our own knowledge, we show them the basic tiling, the basic plastering, the brick laying and the computers and CVs, sports, it's all the staff that do that themselves... anything that keeps them from sitting down and thinking about it too much. Some days you come in, there's not a lot plan and you have to come up with something, by that time it's too late and their attention's already gone or they like a carry on. So we've got to try and attend their needs as much as also keeping them busy and active. We want to give them some sort of practical experience so if they do decide, 'I'm going to screw the nut and get a job', they've got something to put in their CV"

(Youth worker).

These workshops and activities are dependent upon each staff member's personal skills and expertise:

"I'm quite handy on a computer, things like that, CVs, writing it up and things like that, I can do that, but [others] is not too good on a computer. [another] is good at sports, so when we're outside he'll play with drills and games, he's good at all that, so we do have different skills, we need to rely on each other"

(Youth worker).

4.24 However, these staff members are first and foremost youth workers and not trained experts in the fields that they are teaching, therefore their knowledge is limited:

“It’s just our personal experience that teaches them, but I’ve always said there’s going to come a point where one of the wee guys or girls are going to say ‘I know how to do that and you’re doing it wrong’ [laugh] or something like that”

(Youth worker).

4.25 These workshops are also augmented by several outside agencies and individuals; they visit the programme to share their specific area of expertise with members of the group. These agencies are either other relevant youth orientated agencies (e.g. Sexual Health Services), employers or private businesses (e.g. Construction Skills Certificate Scheme) and individuals (e.g. Holistic Therapy). The youth orientated agencies which operate within Inverclyde Council provide their services free, whereas private businesses and individuals are paid a nominal fee for theirs. Outside agencies are recruited on to the programme by staff approaching them and asking if they would be willing to offer their services on the PFP.

4.26 Some activities take place off-site (e.g. driving theory tests, prison visits, sports activities). When these take place the young people are shuttled to and from the off-site location but remain under the overall supervision of the programme staff. Requests made by the young people for particular classes, visits or services are listened to by staff and, where possible, are accommodated (e.g. visit to a sexual health clinic).

Chapter Five: The education sector

Positive Futures Programme and Flexible Learning Packages

5.1 School non-attendance, disruptive and unruly behaviour, and lower academic attainment, or a combination of all of these, were cited as being the main reasons for a young person being referred to the programme. As these extracts below demonstrate, the option to send a young person to the PFP can form part of a FLP and can be used solely with normal school or in conjunction with other programmes or vocational training, depending on each individual's needs:

Extract one:

"The young girl in particular who's on it [PFP] just now, she's a school refuser [truant] almost, had to be cajoled into going to school and that would only be sporadically when somebody was annoying her, but if she was just left to her own devices she wouldn't be there. So really she wasn't having a very enjoyable experience at school when she was here, cause she was limited in her ability to kick off with and then people were forcing her to come to school.

INT: What age was she roughly?

RES2: Well she's this year's fourth year, so she'd be 15.

INT: So she's 15. And she hadn't attended over the last four years; she just walked out when it pleased her?

RES2: First and second year were okay but kind of halfway through second year she started voting with her feet, and then in third year when they picked their subjects and she realises she's so far behind, it's an easy option for her to not come to school"

(School representative 2).

Extract two:

"The boy I had on it last year, he was basically there because his behaviour in school was poor and we were having difficulty maintaining him, it was exclusion after exclusion, you know, we had tried a variety of other supports and measures and nothing was making much difference, and then we decided to look at a kind of package for him after Christmas in fourth year, so he had three days a week on the Positive Futures and the other two days... well, one day a week, he was out in a work placement in a local garage, and the other day he came into school and worked in the pupil support area finishing off bits and pieces of his English folio or anything that he needed to catch up, and that worked very well for him"

(School representative 1).

5.2 It is believed that only a narrow range of young people are suitable for PFP: challenging and troubled young people who find themselves to be under-achieving in their educational studies. The decision making process is then based on whether the young person is *“far too vulnerable, couldn’t cope”* or to put it another way if a young person is not *“streetwise”* or *“able to hold their own”* then it is believed that they would get *“eaten alive”*. Similarly if a young person is having behavioural difficulties but is *“far too academically bright, it’s not going to challenge them”* they would be unsuitable. (School representatives 1, 2 and 3).

5.3 It is also believed that these young people are not hardened criminals or so set in their ways that they cannot be guided in other directions, but that they are potentially on the *“border of starting to get into the kind of criminal world”*. PFP is seen as being one option for those in the education sector to help these *“saveable”* young people and help to *“catch them before they tip over that edge”* and say to them *“here is an alternative for you here, there are alternatives”* (School representatives 1, 2 and 3). Therefore PFP is about giving young people an alternative route to making positive life choices and providing them with a skill set that can be supportive in doing so.

Opinions of the Positive Futures programme

5.4 There are several positive aspects of the PFP that were identified by those in the education sector. For the education sector, the PFP can form an integral part of their commitment to individualised and child centred education. Those in the education sector were convinced that the PFP staff were more than capable to help them deliver these objectives:

“The staff involved are all highly motivated and committed to the individual and are constantly seeking opportunities to meet the needs of the young people involved, keeping them involved and motivated”

(MCMC representative).

5.5 The flexible and evolving nature of the course was also cited as being a significant positive aspect of the PFP:

“It must also be noted that the programme has adapted to meet the needs of young people and schools e.g. aligning timing and length of programme to academic sessions. The programme has also been adapted and developed due to feedback of all stakeholders and this includes mandatory requirements of contacting schools regarding attendance, progression etc.”

(MCMC representative).

5.6 The feedback from the young people on the PFP was also reportedly very good: *“With this [PFP] being part of the option, ‘right, you can go and do this and come to school these three days’, they’ve dived at it, they’ve said ‘aye, this is fine, it’s perfect for me”* (School representative 3).

Indeed, the promise of being allowed to attend PFP in place of subjects that the individual was not engaging with was even as an incentive to encourage school attendance:

"It might well be they're finding modern languages difficult, at that point they'll opt out of modern languages and they'll not be going, so it's easier to slot them back in because they've been coming to school two to three days, and to an extent it's like a carrot we're keeping hold over them as well, I mean, you're saying that if they don't come the three days we're not going to offer you the programme"

(School representative 3).

5.8 There have even been instances where young people have requested to attend the PFP regardless of whether they are suitable or not:

"What you do get is you get the kids coming up to you in the corridor saying 'can I go on that programme that's he's on?' and trying to convince them 'well no, look it's not for you'... 'How not?'... it's trying to convince these kids that it's not for them"

(School representative 3).

Such requests from some of the young people who are still in school but not suitable for the PFP to opt for it may be an indication of the wish to have more vocational opportunities within the education sector generally.

Outcomes of the Positive Futures Programme

5.6 One of the most identifiable outcomes highlighted by those in the education sector was that when young people attended the PFP for two days of the week, their attendance at school for the remaining three days of the week was reported to have generally improved:

"I've got a couple of kids who were disengaged completely in December time, they weren't coming to school at all with virtually a 0% attendance, I've now got a 66% attendance at school and I've also got the other two days at the programme; so we're getting 100% attendance in education, not all in school, in education"

(School representative 3).

5.7 However, there were instances when individuals had attended the PFP but had breached the terms of their FLP by not attending school during the remaining three days of the week. Whilst the priority was to have them attend school and re-enter the education system, attendance at PFP was still interpreted as a positive outcome:

"the girl who's on [PFP] just now, we're still negotiating with her to get her in [school] the other three days, that was part of her learning package that she's not upheld, but she is turning up to Positive Futures every day so we're kind of thinking that's better than nothing... It's very difficult to discern whether you are wasting them with no

disrespect, by putting them onto a programme like this, but then the other side of the coin is if they're not coming to school anyway they're not learning anything academically anyway"

(School representatives 1 and 2).

5.8 Educational attainment was also noted to improve amongst certain individuals as a result of attending the PFP:

"kids have been coming in and they've been working really, really hard to pass the five standard grades that they're still going to be sitting, so that's worked quite well... the three kids that I've got on the programme [were] completely disengaged from school in December, didn't sit their prelims and they've now just passed between Access 3 and having stuff prepared for their Foundation folios for English and all that stuff, they're going to pass at least five academic subjects, which in December wasn't an option"

(School representatives 1 and 3).

Value of Positive Future Programme to the education sector

5.9 The participants in the focus groups were keen to stress the many values of the PFP to their schools in their bids to help provide appropriate support and MCMC for their disengaged young people. Although PFP is not accredited in and of itself, it now appears to be recognised within the education sector in Inverclyde as representing a viable and useful part FLPs and helping to fulfil the mandate of the MCMC and their commitments set out in the CfE:

"More Choices, More Chances... they recognise that it [PFP] helps deliver that programme in terms of we're actually giving people more choices and more chances as part of the programme"

(School representative 1).

"The programme is a valuable addition to the personalisation of choice for pupils in Inverclyde and supports the Curriculum for Excellence, especially in the senior phase and delivering on the entitlements that all young people should experience"

(MCMC representative).

5.10 The PFP was also seen to be generally more appropriate for disengage young people than informal learning opportunities such as work experience due to the care provided by trained and knowledgeable staff who are operating in an a controlled and regulated environment:

"the employer's there to make money and do his job and, I mean, [PFP staff] are there to look after they kids, so that's the difference... the whole outcome of that is it's about them, it's not about the employer. So employers are great, it's great to have it, it's great to get experience but for somebody's who's dropping out of the education system, they can still be within it, but within a structured setting with Positive Futures"

(School representatives 1 and 3).

5.11 Perhaps most significantly, the value of PFP to the education sector was best highlighted by their negative reaction of any potential discontinuation of the PFP:

"I think if we lost this programme it would be a huge resource for these kind of kids would be gone and we would really struggle with them, we would struggle with them, and they would just head back down the rocky road of not appearing in school at all...I would say without that programme, it would jeopardise the flexible learning packages altogether"

(School representatives 1 and 2).

Enhancing links with the education sector

5.12 The desire to strengthen communication links with the PFP was evident. While dialogue between the education sector/schools and the PFP had improved greatly, it was hoped to establish a formalised and regular performance feedback of the young people's progress on the PFP. In particular some form of performance indicator or progress report that could chart the young person's development towards the desired outcomes that had been negotiated between those in the education sector and staff of the PFP at the outset:

"There's got to be an evaluation... I know tick box is a lot of nonsense sometimes, but even something that we are seeing on a weekly basis, we have checked in, they're ticked and they've done what they're supposed to do and they're reaching... if you go back to the curriculum items thing, they're reaching the outcomes, know what I mean, and we could tick a box to say they've reached the outcome: what was the outcome before you went, what was expected of them and did they reach them outcomes when they finished it? And some sort of evaluation process that we could actually put in place and say at the end of it 'this is actually they were going to do and they've done this and from this they've gained this'"

(School representative 1).

Such a tracking system would also allow for the potential to link in the outcomes from the PFP with other accredited outcomes from school.

Chapter Six: Views of the young people

Preference for the programme over school

6.1 Among the young people there was a strong preference for the PFP over school: *“It’s better than school... I don’t like school”* (R1, R2). The main two reasons cited for this preference were the programme content and the attitude of the staff.

6.2 Regarding the programme content it was seen as being more interesting, engaging and relevant to their future prospects and aspirations, compared to the schools where the curriculum was seen as being tedious and irrelevant. The young people also felt that they had a level of autonomy to sit out of activities which they did not want to partake in, unlike in school where participation was mandatory and choices were restricted:

“you don’t need to sit in a class and dae work... you’ve no actual work, stuff you enjoy doing here...stuff you want to do, you get to pick...rather than listening when you’re in school, I had tae dae biology an aw that...an then ye get wide wi the teachers”

(R1, R3, R1, R5).

6.3 Regarding the PFP staff members, when they were compared to teachers, the young people believed that the PFP staff more likely to listen and engage with them: *“[you] can talk tae them an no get moaned at...Aye, they’re better than teachers”* (R8, R16). Young people also appreciated the chance to express their opinions and preferences: *“in school you don’t have a choice, this is mair [more] open wi ye [with you] and you’ll have discussion mair [more], in school you either like or lump it, but here they try and come and go wi ye [with you]”* (R1). On the occasions when a young person had misbehaved the PFP staff were described as being more understanding than teachers and more willing to allow them the opportunity to apologise and make amends for their behaviour: *“Ye don’t get sent, like, oot the room like with school... They gie ye a chance tae fix it, so they do”* (R11, R17).

Opinions on the activities and workshops offered

6.4 The majority of vocational workshops offered were enjoyed: *“I like the plastering and that... I done tiling and, like, bricklaying and aw that”* (R4, R1). Other non-vocational workshops and sessions were also enjoyed, particularly the people who delivered these sessions: *“the massage person’s brilliant... aye [name of ‘Peace Initiative’ employee] is brand new man, love it”* (R9, R4).

6.5 The activities and workshops on offer largely favour the male participants, however the females who were attending the PFP did not express any real concerns about the programmes

content not addressing their needs or not offering activities relevant to them and were happy to do the same workshops as the boys whilst also enjoying the few female activities that were on offer: *“Aye, I like daein aw this, aye... Aye, it’s good, kinda... I painted her nails and she said that tae me ‘ma daughter won’t recognise me!’”* (R3, R7, 12).

6.6 Fieldtrips involving recreational activities (e.g. go-karting) were particularly enjoyed by everyone and more were requested: *“we should go, like, sky diving and stuff... bungee jumping”* (R3, R4).

Positive Outcomes?

6.7 The majority of young people on PFP had some form of contact with other youth based initiatives in the area. Some of these operated prior (Guardian Angels, Inverclyde Initiative) and during (New Horizons) the PFP.

6.8 The majority of the young people appeared to have considered their future options. A significant number were returning to school. Of those who were, many wanted to do so specifically so that they could obtain qualifications (Standard Grades, Highers). A few young people mentioned that when they attended the PFP for two days of the week their school attendance subsequently increased as well: *“Aye, see when I go [to PFP], aye a dae, I go tae every [school] class”* (R2).

6.9 For those who were not returning to school, the majority had ambitions to gain some form of employment. Occupations included: police officer, fire officer, army soldier, car mechanic, building site constructionist (boys), beauty therapist, hairdresser (girls). Many school leavers were also hopefully of gaining further education (college) and/or vocational training. Several young people expressed a desire to use work experience with employers as a way to lead into gaining longer-term employment. For many the paid training options offered by ‘Argyle Training’¹⁰ were a popular choice. Visits by representatives from these further education/training services or day visits to their offices/sites had provided some of the impetus for these choices and ambitions.

6.10 However, some of the activities on offer were not seen as being relevant by some of the young people. For example, when discussing the days when they are taken to practise for their driving theory test one young person commented that:

“daein [doing] the driving theory but there’s nae point cause naine [none] of us are even 17 and ye need tae be 17 tae pass it, it’s pointless, just like a practise hing [thing], uses a bit o our time, or we could be daein something half decent, actually getting something the noo instead o a practise”

(R4).

¹⁰ <http://www.argyll-training.co.uk/about-us.html>

6.11 However, there were one or two who expressed a knowledge that the project operators were working under certain restrictions in what they could offer:

"[age restrictions] kinda limits ... what they can really dae [do], 'cause ye cannae [cannot] put in a building site or that for experience cause of health and safety, because they're no 16 they're no insured, but if you're 16 you can go on a building site and that, but if you're under age you cannae, so cannae really dae much that way"

(R1).

6.12 A few of the young people expressed concern that once they had left school and had attended a programme such as PFP that a level stigma would be attached to them which potentially hindered their future job prospects: *"Aye I've done ma exams an that, but folk arenae willing tae on young people an that who've left school and they're on courses like this, they think we just carry on an that most o the time"* (R17). A few of the young people were also concerned that regardless of the benefits of attending programmes such as PFP could provide that larger structural economic issues (e.g. wide spread unemployment and economic recession) limited their chances of obtaining further employment: *"we need mair opportunities tae prove yersel an that. There's pure naine"* (R9).

6.13 Overall, the vast majority of the young people thought the PFP was beneficial by providing them with some practical qualifications: *"I got a couple o good qualifications fae it last time, first aid at work an that... We got food hygiene, that means we can work in a kitchen an that, stuff like that"* (R6, R9). Some commented that they believe PFP had instilled them with a work ethic and values that they believed they may otherwise have not received: *"ye actually dae come here cause ye want tae learn an that....I think ye learn ye cannae get things unless ye work for it an that"* (R3, R7).

6.14 The vast majority also claimed that they thought the PFP should continue as an option to other young people such as themselves: *"It should keep on daein...it does actually help ye..."* (R1, R3, R17). Several expressed a desire to return to the next 16 week course. The two main improvements suggested were to have more work experience offered, whether directly through PFP or as part of a FLP: *"I want tae dae work experience... some sort o work experience, I wisnae daein that in school* (R6, R1). Several young people mentioned a desire to obtain more qualifications through the PFP.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 This Chapter offers a summary of the main findings of the research. In particular it will highlight the success of the Positive Futures Programme and make recommendations for its continued refinement and development as an innovative and effective programme for supporting, encouraging and developing disengaged young people.

Successes

7.2 Young people, those working in the education sector, and other relevant outside agencies have all expressed strong support for the work of the PFP and the staff members who deliver the programme.

7.3 The PFP identified and addresses a significant gap in the youth service provision in the Inverclyde area and provides a valuable part of the wider remit of the services in the area.

7.4 Attendance at school has increased as a direct result of attendance at the PFP. Consequently, some young people have had more engagement in education which for some has improved their academic achievement and qualifications.

7.5 Increased communication and strengthening of links between the PFP and the education system has raised awareness of the programme, the work that it does and what it hopes to achieve. This has also assisted PFP staff to further tailor the programme to meet the needs of the individual young people.

7.6 PFP is an excellent example of informal/voluntary learning for young people who are better served by this approach than by traditional formal/mandatory education.

7.7 The PFP staff, drawn from experienced youth workers in the Inverclyde area are extremely knowledgeable of many of the local youths and their specific care needs.

7.8 The programme has helped to change the lives of some young people attending the course by providing them with qualifications, support, life-skills and vocational training that they would have been far less likely to experience or attain.

7.9 Over time the course has continuously evolved in its content and service delivery due to innovation by staff, and to them listening to feedback from young people and other relevant agencies.

7.10 Staff are dedicated and genuinely care and support the young people in their care to provide them with a more positive future. Whilst staff acknowledged that it was not always possible to provide such a future for all the young people on the programme, there is nonetheless a desire to help as many as they can: *“I know that’s cheesy but, even if we have 100 people through the door and I help ten of them, that’s ten better off”* (PFP shift-worker).

7.11 By delivering a wide-range of workshops, training opportunities, talks and diversionary activities in conjunction with their various partners, the PFP contributes significantly towards Inverclyde’s SOA, particularly its stated goals of developing a skills base, improving the health of the population and providing the best possible start for young people.

Issues

7.12 The single most significant barrier to the continuation of the programme is that of resources, particularly funding. The programme is currently running at capacity on a shoestring budget and any further reduction in full-time staff will pose a significant threat to its viability. While there is an abundance of support and goodwill for the programme this alone is unfortunately inadequate for securing the long-term financial security of the programme.

7.13 Although information sharing between the PFP staff and the education sector has significantly improved over time both sides feel there are areas where further development is necessary. PFP staff expressed a desire to have more information from the education sector about the young people referred to them. While the PFP shift-workers desire is to have more information of individuals in their care provided to them by their management. Those in the education sector called for a more formalised and regular process to update them on the progress of the pupils they refer.

7.14 The programme does offer extensive informal education but it only has a few accredited courses and identifiable outcomes. Providing more accredited courses was identified as desirable.

Recommendations

7.15 It is highly recommended that every effort be made to secure short and long-term funding for the PFP. At a time when all budgets are being constrained it is perhaps necessary to look at creative ways of keeping the PFP going. For example, traditionally it has been funded primarily by the Local Council with some additional staffing funds provided by Strathclyde Fire and Rescue. This

funding stream is now under threat and therefore it may be appropriate to pool resources from other partner agencies.

7.16 Consideration should be given to how the education department could contribute to the funding of the PFP with regard to retention of staff, levels of stability for the programme, and further development and expansion, especially given the strength of support from the schools involved in this study, and the significant benefits identified.

7.17 An information-sharing protocol should be developed jointly between the PFP and the education sector to ensure that all relevant information is shared for each young person on the programme.

7.18 It is also recommended that links to other relevant agencies within Inverclyde, particularly social services, be strengthened.

7.19 A strategy for dissemination of relevant information to all schools in the Inverclyde area should be developed and implemented.

7.20 The good practice of monitoring feedback from all relevant sources (e.g. internal staff members, external agencies, and young people) on the development of programme content and structure should be continued.

7.21 Links with similar programmes in other council areas should be developed in order to enhance knowledge and understanding of alternative educational programmes for troubled and troublesome young people, and to identify good practice.

7.22 The possibility of further integrating the PFP with the Curriculum for Excellence, of getting the programme some form of accreditation, and of creating a pathway for young people to gain better support for Skills for Life, Learning and Work should be explored.

7.23 The desired outcomes for each young person on the programme should be clearly defined, and their success in achieving these monitored and evaluated.

7.24 Training opportunities to further develop the skills of youth workers beyond their current personal knowledge/experience skills base should be explored to enable them to provide improved training and education to the young people.

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Appendix 1: Council staff interview schedule

- What does the PFP do?
How did it come to be?
How long does it run for?
How is it funded?
Who is involved in the council and how did they become involved?
Describe a 'typical day' for the programme
- Who makes the referrals?
How does the referral process work?
What are the strengths and weaknesses of this process?
- What is your specific role in the programme?
How did you come to be involved?
Has your role change or evolved over time?
- What are the priorities for the programme?
How are these addressed?
What services for young people existed before the programme?
What does the programme offer that was not previously available?
Has the programme evolved or changed over time? If so, what drove these changes?
How have the young people responded to the programme?
- What other agencies are involved in the programme?
How did they become involved?
Are these agencies paid or do they volunteer?
What do they contribute to the programme?
How are these agencies received by the young people?
In your opinion, have some worked better than others?
Are there any agencies you would like to see join the programme?
Have any declined to participate after being approached?
- What happens to the young people when they leave the programme?
Is support maintained in any way?
Can they join other programmes/initiatives?
- What do you perceive the future of the programme to be?
What are the possibilities – what is needed to achieve this?
What are the obstacles – are they surmountable?

- In an ideal world, what you like to see happen with the programme? Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 2: Guardian Angel programme

Friday 5th December

Venue- Greenock Sports Centre

Football

Workshop- Gang violence

Gym

Saturday 6th December

Venue- James Watt College

Internet bus

Workshop- Joinery

Workshop- Beauty Therapy

Workshop- Alcohol Abuse

Friday 12th December

Venue- Greenock Waterfront

Ice Skating

Workshop- Drum/Guitar 71

Workshop- Knife crime

Saturday 13th December

Venue-James Watt College

Workshop- DJing

Workshop- Hairdressing

Workshop- Car Maintenance

Workshop- Healthy Eating

Friday 9th January 2009

Venue- Greenock Waterfront

Spin fit class/ Dance Class

Workshop- Anti-Social Behaviour

Internet Bus

Saturday 10th January 2009

James Watt College

Pace Theatre Group

Alcohol Play and Presentation

Appendix 3: Positive Futures Programme Itinerary

POSITIVE FUTURE 4

Monday 23rd January

Activities

11.00 am - 12.00pm

Gym Induction

Video Diary & Pictures

Wednesday 25th January

Activities

Holistic Workshop

Peace Initiative

1.30-3.30

Friday 27th January

Activities

Drumming/Music

Woodwork workshop

1.30-2.30

Monday 30th January

Activities

Castle Semple

Bike Repair

Computing

Wednesday 1st February

Activities

Car workshop

Rugby Taster session

Photography workshop

Friday 3rd February

Activities

Workshop

Bike workshop

1.30-2.30

Monday 6th February

Activities

Football

Workshop

Workshop

Music

Wednesday 8th February

Activities

11.00-2.00pm

1.30-2.30

Friday 10th February

Activities

11.00am-2.00pm

2.30-3.30pm

Friday 17th February

Activities

Workshop

Woodwork Workshop

1.30-2.30

Induction & Health & Safety- Group Session
Personal Training Programme

Group Introduction & Contents
Introductions to Food Hygiene

Making CD Holders
Badminton sessions/coaching

Week 1
CV's

wheel changing

Tiling & Plastering
stripping parts
Badminton sessions/coaching

Fitness & Health
Healthy Eating
DJing

Food Hygiene Training
Cyber Bullying

Food Hygiene Training
Financial Fitness Team
Allowances and Money management

Knife Crime and Vandalism
Bird Boxes
Badminton sessions/coaching

<u>Monday 20th February</u>	
Activities	
Workshop	Car Battery changing
Gym session	
Quiz	Health/Food
<u>Wednesday 22nd February</u>	
Activities	
11.0am-12.00pm	CSCS Training
Holistic Training	
Peace Initiative	
<u>Friday 24th February</u>	
Activities	
11.00-12.00pm	Financial Fitness Team
Workshop	Brick lying
1.30-2.30pm	Badminton session/coaching
<u>Monday 27th February</u>	
Activities	
10.00am-3.00pm	First Aid Training
<u>Wednesday 29th February</u>	
Activities	
11.00am-12.00pm	CSCS Training
Peace initiative	
Workshop	Car wiper/bulbs change
<u>Friday 2nd March</u>	
Activities	
Football	
Visit to Paisley Fire & Rescue Safety Centre	
<u>Monday 5th March</u>	
Activities	
10.00-12.00pm	British Transport Police
Gym Session	
Workshop	Tiling/Plastering
<u>Wednesday 7th March</u>	
Activities	
11.00am-12.00pm	CSCS Training
Peace Initiative	
1.00pm-2.00pm	On knives Edge Workshop
<u>Friday 9th March</u>	
Activities	
Workshop	Woodwork
1.30-2.30	badminton sessions/coaching
<u>Monday 12th March</u>	
Activities	
Games contest	
1.00pm-2.00pm	Visit to Intec
<u>Wednesday 14th March</u>	
Activities	
11.00-12.00pm	CSCS Training
Peace Initiative	
Holistic training	
Gym session	
<u>Friday 16th March</u>	
Activities	
Workshop	Bike repair
1.30-2.30pm	Badminton session/coaching
<u>Monday 19th March</u>	

Activities 10.00-11.00am Workshop Gym session	Visit to Argyle Training Centre Jewellery making
<u>Wednesday 21st March</u>	
Activities 11.00-12.00pm Peace initiative Football Training	CSCS Training
<u>Friday 23rd March</u>	
Activities Interview techniques Workshop 1.30-2.30	Changing brake pads Badminton sessions/coaching
<u>Monday 26th March</u>	
Activities 11.00-12.00pm Gym session Workshop 2.00-3.00pm	Sexual health Workshop Arts & Crafts Visit to Unity
<u>Wednesday 28th March</u>	
Activities 11.00-12.00pm Gym session Workshop	CSCS Training Health workshop Bike Repair
<u>Friday 30th March</u>	
Activities Video Diaries Bowling Largs	
<u>Monday 16th April</u>	
Activities Fund raising day	
<u>Wednesday 18th April</u>	
Activities Peace Initiative Gym session Workshop	Health workshop Drumming/DJing
<u>Wednesday 25th April</u>	
Peace initiative Workshop Workshop	Car valeting Arts & Crafts
<u>Friday 27th April</u>	
Activities Workshop Quiz Football	Bike/Parts Sport/Football
<u>Monday 30th April</u>	
Activities 11.00-12.00pm Gym session Art & Design Bike Repair	Alcohol Workshop Health workshop
<u>Wednesday 2nd May</u>	
Activities Peace Initiative	

Holistic Training Workshop <u>Friday 4th May</u> Activities 10.00-11.30pm Gym session Football	Photography Visit Greenock Prison Health workshop
<u>Wednesday 9th May</u> Activities Holistic Training Workshop Peace Initiative	Brick/Plastering
<u>Friday 11th May</u> Activities Art & Design Job Application Letters Football	
<u>Monday 14th May</u> Activities Garden Project	
<u>Wednesday 16th May</u> Activities Peace Initiative Holistic Training Art & Design Bike Repair	
<u>Friday 18th May</u> Activities POD painting	
<u>Monday 21st May</u> Activities 11.00-12.00pm Gym session Bank Accounts Visit	Alcohol Workshop Health workshop Science Centre
<u>Wednesday 23rd May</u> Activities Peace Initiative Gym session Bike Repair Workshop	Health workshop Car maintenance
<u>Friday 25th May</u> Activities Workshop Workshop Football	Music CV's letter writing0.
<u>Monday 28th May</u> Activities 11.00-12.00pm Gym session Art & Design Bike Repair	Group 1 Peace Initiative Health workshop Week 2
<u>Wednesday 30th May</u> Activities 11.00-12.00pm Gym session	Driving Test Theory Health workshop

Art & Design	
<u>Wednesday 6th June</u>	
Activities	
11.00am-12.00pm	Driving Theory
Holistic Training	
Peace Initiative	
<u>Friday 8th June</u>	
Activities	
Day Fishing	
<u>Monday 11th June</u>	
Activities	
Early Touches Coaching	
<u>Wednesday 13th June</u>	
Activities	
11.00-12.00pm	Driving Test Theory
Peace initiative	
Holistic Training	
Football	
<u>Friday 15th June</u>	
Activities	
Visit	Careers Office
Workshop	Woodwork
Football	
<u>Monday 18th June</u>	
Activities	
Gym Session	
Visit	Transport Museum
<u>Wednesday 20th June</u>	
Activities	
Peace Initiative	
Video Diaries	
Fitness Plan	
<u>Friday 22nd June</u>	
Activities	
Paint Balling All Day	