

Arts on Estates

**A Pilot project funded by
Homes for Islington**

**In partnership with
Islington Young People's Services
and CEA@Islington**

This pilot project was initiated in October 2006 by a Steering Group from the Islington Young People's Services and CEA@Islington and follows on from a review undertaken by the Children's Services regarding after school provision in the borough of Islington.

The outcome of the consultation was an identified need to broaden activities and provision for children and young people in their locality, and arts activities in particular were identified as a need, to compliment the range of sports and other youth activities on offer.

The project has been set up to offer a range of arts activities to young people aged 10 – 18 on identified estates, as part of a broader strategy to address anti-social behaviour. Funding was secured by Homes for Islington and Islington Young People's Services, CEA@Islington and other voluntary sector providers came together to plan the objectives and priorities:-

Objectives

- To offer a range of visual and performing arts activities to young people from 10 to 18 years
- To target young people who are at risk and/or may not be engaged with structured activities
- To evaluate outcomes and build on successes to enable further developments and progression

The Steering Group prioritised seven estates in Islington in this first phase:

Elthorne	Andover
New River Green	Harvist
Bemerton	Mayville
Girdlestone	

A process of initial consultation took place with young people and youth professionals to consider programme activity so that each estate could identify which arts activity would be best suited for their young people. Project activity took place between January and March 2007.

A Project Coordinator, Sheelah Sloane, was taken on in November 2006 to coordinate the various projects, undertake monitoring visits and write an evaluation report. This role was crucial in the success of the programme, taking into account the short time scale in setting up and delivering the projects. The following written and visual documentation records the success of the seven projects.

Mayville Youth Project – Music Production

The Mayville project is part of a much bigger project, engaging a range of young people on the Mayville estate and beyond, in activities such as a football team, a driving school and a table tennis team, who are being trained for the Olympics 2012.

The project already has a well-equipped sound studio in the basement at the Mayville Community Centre. With the HFI money, the Centre has now bought two Apple laptop computers, which have helped enormously in the studio production work. They have empowered the young people, as they are able to take the computers home and out on location and with the help of a camcorder, they are able to bring sounds back into the recording studio to mix. This has given the young people a great sense of responsibility and is a positive contribution to their economic well-being.

Altogether, 35 young people have taken part in the project, with a core group of approximately eight. The project is 100% sustainable, as it has improved the infrastructure already at the studio and, although all the sessions are tutor-led, the aim is for the young people to learn enough so that they can pass on their skills to others.

Aims of the project

- To deliver a 12-week programme, twice weekly, introducing young people to the recording studio and to computerised music programmes
- To place emphasis on responsibility and teamwork and to build confidence
- To empower the young people to express themselves through discussion and making their own music
- To produce a professional CD by the end to give to each young person involved in the project

The project opened on a 2-tier system, allowing young people who attended the youth club to access the sessions on a drop-in basis, as well as young people linked to the detached project. All participants were welcome, regardless of postcode, gender or race.

The young people, who ranged in age from 10 to 20 were at different levels of skills and had different musical interests. Some had already created their own material to record; others were ready to record their own voices and were comfortable to be videoed; some were more interested in the sound engineering aspect, while others were more interested in experimenting with sounds and beats. The studio engineer was able to accommodate most of the young people's skills and abilities within the sessions, although some of the younger youths were a bit shy about expressing their ideas in front of the older youths.



Tutor, Dean, directing one of the young people in the studio

A singing tutor was also engaged to work with the young people, who was able to help them with their microphone and breathing techniques and confidence building.

Stage 2 of the project will take place over the summer and using the laptop computers, will combine music, drama and filming to produce an advert made by the young people to demonstrate their feelings against anti-social behaviour and illustrating some of the activities that they enjoy. Stage 3 of the project will take place in 2008 and will be a performance opportunity for the young people at the Newington Green Community Festival, celebrating its 300 year anniversary.



Dean the tutor, using the mixer with one of the laptops

Outcomes of the project

- The young people were able to develop their musical skills in a controlled and supervised space
- They were able to take ownership of the studio equipment and the laptops and learnt to respect the equipment, thus earning a great amount of trust with both the youth leaders and their peers
- Young people learnt new skills and encouraged those with learning difficulties to participate in the programme
- A demo CD has been produced to give to funders as evidence of the work achieved
- Research will take place into further funding to develop national accredited outcomes as an exit strategy for the young people