

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**

**Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 7 May 2008**

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**Subject: Sports United - a programme of sporting activities for young people and adults with, or affected by, disabilities**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of the development of Sports United (formerly Youth United), a programme of sporting activities for adults and young people with, or affected by, disabilities.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** Leisure Services introduced a programme of sporting activities for children with, or affected by disabilities in 2005. This followed a successful open day in March 2005 where over 60 children enjoyed participating in a range of sports including football, basketball, trampolining, archery, athletics, badminton, arts and crafts and soft play. The scheme was aimed at children aged 4 to 13 years and is branded Shining Stars; the initiative was developed with the assistance of a customer forum comprising parents and carers. Shining Stars is now firmly established in the annual Leisure Services programme of activities and takes the form of 24 supervised sessions held within the sports halls at the Meadow Centre and Play Drome.
- 2.2** Once Shining Stars had been successfully established, thoughts turned to providing sporting activities for young adults. It was considered important to show families that a continuous pathway existed for children as they reached adolescence and Youth United was established in 2007. Youth United was developed as a programme for young adults similar to the Shining Stars scheme.
- 2.3** Revenue funding of £10,000 has been committed by Elected Members to develop the programme. The budget includes provision for purchase of specialised sports equipment, for staff to attend courses on disability coaching and awareness, and to pay for coaching staff to deliver the sessions.
- #### **3. Main Issues**
- 3.1** Shortly after Youth United had been established a number of parents and carers of adults contacted Leisure Services to request a programme be created for adults.

It was always Leisure Services intention to develop a programme for adults and it was decided that it would make sense to include adults in the Youth United scheme. The scheme was re-branded from Youth United to Sports United and also included the Shining Stars scheme.

- 3.2** Leisure Services already provided a range of activities for people with disabilities such as swimming, sauna, gym sessions, keep fit classes and selected dryside activities. These activities are generally carried out on a casual basis. Leisure Services established a small working group of parents and carers of young adults and adults to help develop the Sports United scheme. It was agreed that regular supervised sessions be programmed which would include activities such as football, trampolining, badminton and indoor athletics but would also introduce new activities such as boccia, a game similar to indoor bowls. It was also agreed that selected pieces of fitness equipment would be made available within the sports halls during the sessions.
- 3.3** The new scheme was officially launched at an open day at the Play Drome in October 2007 where over 40 young adults and adults participated in a number of sports. Feedback gathered at the open day enabled the working group to plan an annual programme for 2008-2009 which contained a balance programme of activities for a wide range of disabilities.
- 3.4** The Sports United scheme is free to join using the Council's Passport to Leisure card. There are 24 supervised sessions programmed throughout the year alternating between the Meadow Centre in Dumbarton and the Play Drome in Clydebank. In addition to the supervised sessions members can use their membership card to gain access to the leisure centres at any time and receive a range of other activities either free of charge or at a heavily discounted price.
- 3.5** To date there are 64 members of the scheme and the supervised sessions regularly attract attendances in excess of 20 per session. Members receive a regular newsletter from Leisure Services to update them on issues of interest such as new activities and open days.
- 3.6** A sports open day is planned at the Play Drome for 10th May 2008 specifically aimed at users of wheelchairs. Staff will supervise activities ideally suited for wheelchair users such as boccia and archery. With the use of a special hoist, trampolining is also a popular activity with many of the participants.
- 3.7** Leisure Services receive support from colleagues in Social Work Services and other local agencies such as Cornerstone, Kilpatrick and Cunard Schools who assist with the provision of advice and help with distributing publicity materials.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

- 4.1** There have been a number of specialist training development opportunities for leisure staff involved in delivering the activity sessions. These have been funded through the initiative.
- 4.2** A cross section of staff across all levels from each of the three main leisure centres have been involved in delivering the practical sessions. All staff involved have shown a commendable level of enthusiasm and commitment to the scheme and have received praise and thanks from the participants, their families and carers for their work in delivering the activity sessions.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** £10,000 funding has been allocated to the scheme, which covers staff training, staff costs, specialist equipment and facilities, marketing and promotion.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

- 6.1** There are no risks associated with the content of this report.

#### **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1** The Sports United scheme allows for the progression of sporting activities and opportunities for disabled customers from school age children to youth and into adulthood. The sessions give the participants the opportunity to take part in new activities and to socialise with new people.
- 7.2** The provision has been created as a result of the demand from parents and carers of disabled adults and to give the children participating in the Shining Stars scheme access to further opportunities as they outgrow the programme for younger children.
- 7.3** The staff commitment that has been given to this initiative is considerable in both organising and delivering all aspects of the scheme.

#### **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1** **The Committee is asked to note the development of a programme of sporting activities for people with or affected by disability.**

**Elaine Melrose**

**Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**

**Date: 14 April 2008**

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**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All