

Positive activities programme

The Customer Involvement team has responsibility for delivering a programme of positive activities. This programme offers new ways for YHN to engage with a wider range of customers, improves the lives of our customers and improves our relationship with our customers. Since December we have delivered the following activities:

Access to Basketball

This is a partnership with Newcastle Eagles which invites YHN customers and their families to attend basketball games. It also includes a reward system which helps children and young people learn about community safety and healthy lifestyles. 100 people have attended per game.

YHN staff make up an A2B working group who attend the games and deliver engagement activities with the families. The children take part in a 'Rewards Programme' where they can accumulate stickers that correspond to prizes. They acquire the stickers by attending the games and by completing the tasks that have been designed by the A2B working group. The tasks are themed and relate to initiatives that help to encourage young people to lead a positive lifestyle; The Respect Agenda, Every Child Matters, Change 4 Life.

The games are also used as an opportunity to engage with tenants and target our hard to reach groups. The parents are given information and asked to complete questionnaires relating to different YHN services.

Eagles courtside challenge

This project started in February 2010 and is delivered in partnership with the Newcastle Eagles and FHM. The project centres around a booklet that is delivered in 28 primary schools across Newcastle. The schools are hand-picked as they are located in areas that are heavily populated with YHN properties.

There are nine tasks included in the booklet and the aim is to promote a sustainable community. The fun activities are aimed at encouraging the children to think about the small things that they can do to make their community a nicer and safer place to live. The pupils work through some of the tasks in the class room but are also encouraged to take the booklets home and work with their parents.

The project is launched in each school with an assembly delivered by a YHN representative and a Newcastle Eagles player. The pupils are then given the booklets and a deadline for completion. YHN and the Eagles then visit the school again before the completion date to help the pupils with one of the more difficult tasks. This session is used to encourage the pupils to complete the booklet and to increase our interaction with the project.

Each pupil that completes the booklet will receive two free tickets to the Eagles play-off game on April 23rd. There are also extra VIP prizes for outstanding pieces of work. The game on the 23rd April is a 'Celebration

Game' where all of the schools come together and showcase some of the good practice.

Rookie golf programme

This is an indoor target golf programme aimed for older people and people with limited mobility. The programme is in a large proportion of YHN sheltered housing schemes which includes a league format where they compete against one another. Over 100 people across sheltered housing are participating in the scheme.

Intergenerational bowls

This project is in partnership with the West Denton Community Centre and involved two secondary schools from the local area. Thirty five pupils from the two schools (Walbottle and All Saints) take part in an eight week indoor bowls coaching programme at the West Denton Bowls Centre. The pupils are specifically chosen because the school describe them as being disengaged from traditional sport.

The pupils attend the sessions and learn all aspects of the game of indoor bowls. The qualified coaches are provided by Bowls North of the Tyne and the large majority live in the local area, often on the same estates as the pupils.

The aims of the project are:

- To address Anti Social Behaviour problems on local estates by improving relationships between people from different generations.
- To challenge the negative stereotypes that each generation has about the other – especially the preconceived idea that elderly people are immobile and housebound.
- To use sport as a 'common ground' between young and old.
- To challenge the negative connotations of the sport by introducing two schools into a structured but enjoyable programme of activity. Prior to the scheme the young people described bowls as 'marbles for old people' and we hoped that this perception would change.

The pupils are encouraged to return to the club and play bowls independently. Vouchers and discounted fees are used to incentive the structured activity.

Walker Christmas event

YHN sponsored the annual Christmas Party at the Lightfoot Centre. The party is aimed at families and young people who live in the East End of Newcastle. We used the event to consult with tenants and increase our number of involved customers. 345 people attended the event and although the majority were children, we still received completed surveys from fifty six adults, eight of who are now involved customers and are part of our make a difference volunteers.