



HAF Case Study

SPARK! Camp 2023 – Bradford Youth Justice Service
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SPARK! YJS Summer Activities Camps are run by Bradford Youth Justice Service and were created by YJS Manager Michelle Buchan in 2021. The camps are aimed at children aged 10-18 years, funded by the Department for Education HAF (Holiday Activities and Food Programme) and aimed at reducing exploitation and offending.

The camps are primarily aimed at children who are in receipt of pupil premium or benefits-related free school meals but also those children with SEND or SEMH. The Youth Justice Service also invites children assessed as vulnerable to take part, to help keep them safe, healthy and nurtured and match fund some activities to extend the invite to children within the service who would benefit from the sessions.

The idea is to also offer new opportunities for young people to 'spark' their interest in new hobbies and aspirations through providing activities that the children have not likely tried before and taking them to places they have not previously been.

Once the children have completed the sessions, they are provided with framed certificate awards and references for use later during their education/work applications. We also provide follow up visits to children and their carers to help support any aspirations they may have in terms of the activities and obtain feedback for next year.

The project runs for three weeks over the summer period and is in its third year of successful completion, winning the AYM John Hawkins Award for Innovation earlier this year. The John Hawkins' Award is presented annually by the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers to a youth offending service for innovation and creativity in youth justice practice. The project was also selected as a finalist for the last two years in Bradford Council's Service Excellence Awards in the 'Children at the Heart of all we do' category.

This year we provided a whole range of activities supported by Youth Justice staff but also with partners. The sports, creativity and enriching activities included; gorge walking, multi sports, bowling, escape rooms, trampolining, Ninja Warrior, go karting, hiking/walking, laser zones, bowling and water sports, art sessions, learning about sustainability/growing vegetables and fruit, creative writing and expressing themselves through rap, cooking and preparing food plus day trips to the beach in Newcastle, with a visit to see the Angel of the North landmark.

We also held lots of day visits, including to the Lake District, Knowsley Safari Park, Drayton Manor theme park and the beautiful village of Portmeirion with a stop-off at Conwy's 'UK's Smallest House' attraction on the way back home to Bradford. The children absolutely loved these days out and enjoyed having a paddle in the sea to cool off too!

A huge part of the days involves making sure the children are well fed, happy and safe. We encourage active participation and voices in terms of activity choices and restaurant/food options to encourage pro social behaviours and self-esteem growth. As many of our young people are not in education or training and/ or SEND children and in the youth justice system through exploitation, this was fantastic. It was great to see the children learning new skills, combating fears, and encouraging each other. Lots of new lasting friendships were made.

Of course, these activities do not come without managing difficulties and issues on the way, but our youth justice staff worked hard during the three weeks to ensure the camps were inclusive and a safe environment was created and maintained. A huge thank you to all the staff who supported the project this year. Initial feedback has been significantly positive which is fantastic and again this year, the children are asking for a residential opportunity!

In terms of impact, we collate feedback from families but also signpost families to specific help and support. 2023 saw larger numbers referred to foodbanks and Early Help support with regards to safeguarding concerns.

SPARK! Camps allow youth justice workers to really get to know children and talk to them during activities that allows us to safeguard children far better than within standard supervision appointments. It also gains trust from families and enables us that 'step in the door' in terms of safeguarding and interventions for families and individuals.

We utilise partnerships that already in place to keep costs low but to also gain advice regarding risk assessments, minibus hire, and free use of sports spaces and room hire etc. Each year we also add to this list, to help provide better opportunities from this networking. There are always group discounts and calling companies always helps to encourage a deal particularly when explaining the project.

Whilst SPARK! is aimed at keeping children safe and fed we are also aiming to reduce exploitative criminal activity locally and do review this using data analysis. We also deliver interventions on the road and during sessions to help the children learn and develop but to also allow them to test their thinking skills by allowing independence, confidence saying no and not adhering to peer pressure etc.

My 5 Top Tips for HAF Providers:

1. Be dynamic and creative with planning, ask for discounts/deals and utilise partnerships where possible to keep costs low. Talk to other HAF providers, what can you offer each other?
2. Expect dropouts and no shows, have contingency for these so spaces are filled.
3. Keep activities moving, lots of shorter activities keeps children interested and engaged.
4. Be inclusive and encourage participation – listen to what the children want/think. Give choices.
5. Make memories! Have fun, day trips and treat days really do make a difference to children's lives!

2023 for SPARK! Camp was bigger and better than ever. Here are some photographs from the activities, the smiles and Bradford spirit speak for themselves.

We also have lots of videos on our X (Twitter) page @Bradford_yjs and @Spark_camps & below also shows our flyer, AYM John Hawkins Award and some anecdotal feedback from the children.



SPARK!

Bradford Youth Justice Service
Summer Activity Camps 2023

We are looking for young people in the Youth Justice Service to join our fun SPARK! Summer Camps

The activity camps are on:

- Monday 7th until Friday 11th August
- OR
- Monday 14th until Friday 18th August
- OR
- Tuesday 29th August until Friday 1st September

We have lots of activities for you to try!

-  Learn a new skills and hobbies
-  Make new friends
-  Have lots of fun in the holidays!

WE WILL ALSO TAKE YOU ON A TRIP TO NANDO'S GO TO THE SEASIDE, VISIT A THEME PARK AND HAVE A SPECIAL AWARDS CEREMONY!



Football Arts & Crafts



Theme park trips



Cooking Days out



Y.J. Summer Activities 2022

WINNER

2022

AYM John Hawkins Award

For Innovation and Creativity
in Youth Justice Practice







Spark! Camp Anecdotal Feedback from Children:

This week has been really exciting! Can I come again next week? So much better than hanging around bored

I didn't want to come. My worker said it would be good for me. I have actually had a laugh. Better than school- I loved the cooking! I am gonna cook for my mum!

I want to work in a zoo! Animals are awesome. Proper wicked.

I smashed my phone on a ride at Blackpool but I don't care- it's been proper ace and good to get out of Bradford.

I have made some decent mates. I have also realised I can do stuff alone and I aren't scared. I'm looking forward to looking for a job now Michelle

I proper loved the animals at Knowsley. I haven't seen animals like that in Bradford- or even anywhere! The sea lions made me feel chilled

I have never eaten so much and done so many fun things!

It's been SICK! Like awesome. I can't skate though! Fell loads.

You YOT workers are actually alright!