



15 October 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Ref: Supporting young people during this difficult time

I am writing to you on behalf of the Lisburn Detached and Outreach Forum that meet on a regular basis to support young people in the greater Lisburn area. We all recognise that young people are currently going through a particularly difficult time with Covid restrictions and its impact across many areas of their lives.

Youth Services have been working with our partner agencies (PSNI and PCSP) to develop ways in which to support young people, particularly at weekends by deploying detached and outreach workers to deliver street based youth work to engage those young people in key areas and try and divert them away from risk and harm.

Over the past number of weeks there has been an increasing number of young people gathering in areas such as Duncan's Dam, Queen Elizabeth Playing Fields, Wallace Park, Lagan Valley Island (Civic Centre) and the Tow Path with at times up to 50-60 young people. These large gatherings can prove problematic as Covid restrictions are not being adhered to and some young people are engaging in underage drinking, drug taking and criminal behaviours. Young people are at times putting themselves at risk and other people at risk and unfortunately when it gets to this stage formal interventions are required by the PSNI. All our partners are trying to support young people to make good choices and prevent formal interventions from being needed so we want to encourage young people from making decisions that will negatively affect their lives both in the short term and longer term.

At this time we would just like to make all parents aware of the places that young people are congregating and the potential risk they could be putting themselves in. We would appreciate if you could raise awareness of the issues with your child and the risks associated with meeting in large groups and/or participating in such activities at this time. There are opportunities to engage in youth services through our youth service partners and contact information has been provided below if you are interested in finding out about what's on offer for young people in the Lisburn area.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. We appreciate your ongoing support in the matter.

Yours faithfully

Lisburn Detached and Outreach Forum

List of youth services in the Lisburn Area:

Lisburn YMCA	<u>Lisburn YMCA Facebook</u>
EA Youth Services	<u>Lisburn & Castlereagh Area Youth Service Facebook</u>
Resurgam Youth Initiative	<u>Resurgam Youth Initiative Facebook</u>
Damask Youth Project	<u>Damask Lisburn Facebook</u>