



YOUNG PEOPLE



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE PARISH TOWN COUNCIL CASE STUDY

Tracey Quinn, Manager of Teenage Advice Centre/Teenage Information Centre (TACTIC), explains the range of services the 'one stop shop' provides to young people in the area.



In the centre of our town, utilising one of our oldest buildings is TACTIC. Leighton-Linslade Town Council's Teenage Advice Centre/Teenage Information Centre (TACTIC) for 12 to 19 year olds. Set up in 2003 by a concerned local doctor and Town Councillors, this 'one stop shop' provides a service dedicated to the needs of young people with trained professionals who respond effectively to the young people's needs.

TACTIC offers free access to a range of services for young people with a drop-in facility providing a safe environment for them to use as a social space after school and in their own time. The service provides one-to-one confidential advice, counselling rooms, access to computers and opportunities to explore the world around them and all the issues they encounter through discussion and programmed activities. We also programme accreditation courses and learning new skills in a fun and creative way. Importantly, building trust and respect between a young person and the youth worker is more likely to result in their receiving the support needed.

Part of the original brief thirteen years ago, was to focus on 'tier one' support such as accessing information on a variety of subjects. 'Tier two' support for young people is also accessed via TACTIC such as specialist advice, counselling and information. This is when the partner agencies who use the centre to deliver outreach services appear on the scene. Those working in youth services now refer to this approach as 'early intervention' with the aim of reducing the number of young people progressing to a higher level of need.



TACTIC Youth Forum members aged 14-18yrs

Here in Leighton-Linslade we are proud to say that the TACTIC centre is established as part of the fabric of the town centre. A key youth provision well respected by young people, parents and other professionals. Independent feedback received during a workshop for adolescent service provision in November this year, was that there is "no stigma associated with the TACTIC centre."

The centre continues to meet the original vision of its creators and develops with the changing needs in our community.



The centre is staffed by a professional team of youth workers with visiting specialist agencies offering a variety of confidential support and advice. The staff team and centre is funded by the town council and the annual running costs for this unique facility is £180,350. Not an insignificant amount for a Town Council. As a growing town with a population growth of 5% between 2011 and 2013 and housing growth on-going, the service is likely to be needed as much in the future as now.



Work has expanded alongside town growth to offer satellite provisions in the park pavilions helping young people in other parts of the town access TACTIC for social and development opportunities. School holiday programmes have also recently been introduced successfully and a group supporting young people with disabilities continues to grow in popularity. All this enables us to offer positive activities to a wider audience.

The centre now offers mentoring to individual young people who may need extra support in the transition into employment with a weekly work club for 16-21yr olds motivating them to get into work, training or a youth volunteer scheme. Developing leadership and people skills is part of being a member of the TACTIC youth forum giving a voice to service users. A 'schools offer' is in development to help young people and schools manage issues such as bullying and health & wellbeing life skills.

TACTIC has seen thousands of young people over the thirteen years access the centre and continues to take referrals from doctors, parents, social care, schools and walk in's off the street.

We have contact with and support on average 100+ young people on a weekly basis and our specialist agencies have 250+ appointments per annum.

The centre is evolving and flexible in these changing times but the core principle of offering a local dedicated Teenage Advice & Information centre remains.