

**BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Environment and Leisure Department**

**Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

**RE: Update on Be Active Card**

**Introduction**

In June 2013 the Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny committee requested a review of the Gold beeZ card. Throughout 2013-14 officers from Leisure and Children's Services worked collaboratively to review the existing arrangements and suggest improvements in order to raise awareness and increase the uptake.

**Current Position**

The following collated information demonstrates the positive impact that implementing the 4 work strands, previously reported to the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group and Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny committee has had relating to the Be Active card and encouraging more CIOC to participate in an active lifestyle.

**A. Increasing beeZ card numbers**

To promote a healthy, active lifestyle and access to the borough's leisure services by CIOC there was a shared aim to increase the number of CIOC who have a Be Active card.

At the end of 2013/14 the number of Be Active card subscriptions had increased from 14 to 176 (4% to 50% of CIOC). In the subsequent 18 months this has further increased to 292 (>80% of CIOC)

Operationally the communication between Children's Services and the Leisure Development team is working well. Since November 2015 there have been 35 new referrals, including change of placements and ceased LAC's / Leaving Care.

**Communication**

The administration of the Be Active card is centrally coordinated by the Leisure Development team (not by individual leisure centres). The improved communication process between the Review Team in Children's Services and the Leisure Development team in Environment and Leisure is working well.

Independent Review Officers now routinely ask whether the child / young person has a Be Active Card for accessing leisure opportunities in the Borough and if not the Leisure Development team are contacted directly with a card being issued directly to the young person along with information on the benefits of the card.

Frequently Asked Question sheets and discussions in reception meetings have raised awareness amongst front line leisure staff.

## **B. Branding and Awareness**

A new leaflet was designed in consultation with CIOC to be used by the Independent Review Officers to raise the awareness of young people entering CIOC. Information on the Be Active card is regularly included in Children's Services newsletters to foster carers to ensure that its availability is promoted and awareness is raised. This is reinforced through the Review Team.

## **C. Eligibility Criteria**

The agreed changes to the age eligibility criteria were implemented in January 2014; these support the transitions of the young people engaged in the CIOC and Leaving Care services. The changes were to increase the eligible age for a 'Be Active' beeZ card subscription from 17 years to 21 years for those Leaving Care and to 25 years for those with a disability.

### **Extension to the Be Active Card**

Currently the Be Active membership is accessible to those 350+ children and young people currently classified as CIOC. The Corporate Parenting and Specialist Advisory Group had requested that consideration be given to extending the eligibility criteria for the 'Be Active' scheme to cover the borough's 175 foster carers.

It was suggested that Be Active Memberships need to be issued to carers including an additional plus 1. This would then enable foster children (with their own Be Active membership card), to attend free leisure together with their foster carers.

It was made clear in the scrutiny reports that this request required additional resources to be identified to cover the costs of extending the scheme to Foster Carers. To date, and with increasing pressure on resources there has been no progress on agreeing additional budget to cover an extended Be Active scheme.

However, it should be noted that foster carers living or working in the borough, registered with a borough GP or in full time education in the borough are eligible for the re:refresh programme of free leisure which includes weekend junior and family sessions.

We have cross referenced foster carers with the beeZ card data base and we know that over 50% of all registered foster carers have a beeZ card. When those living outside the borough (e.g. Birmingham, Rochdale, Chorley etc) are excluded the percentage of foster carers with a beeZ card increases to nearly 70%, with the majority of these accessing the re:refresh programme of free leisure.

From the information available it is clear that the majority of foster carers are already utilising the leisure facilities on offer to them within the borough and that this is predominantly via the existing free leisure programme available through re:refresh.

### **Next Steps / Further Actions**

In response to concerns raised through the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group that, despite FAQs to leisure centres and recent emails there is low awareness of the Be Active card further work will be undertaken through leisure to improve the knowledge and awareness of front line staff.

The increased uptake of the Be Active card is pleasing but staff in both Children's Services and the Leisure Development Team will continue to ensure there is good communication between the services, supporting CIOC to participate.

## The Be Active Card Scheme for CIOC and Care Leavers

This scheme entitle CIOC and Care leavers up to the age of 21 years (or 25 years for people with a disability) to gain FREE access to a range of casual activities available within the borough's leisure facilities.

### Which Leisure Centres?

The Be Active card can be used in the following centres:-

Darwen Leisure Centre  
Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre  
Audley Sports Centre  
Daisyfield Swimming Pools  
Shadsworth  
Leisure Centres  
Pleckgate High School Community Use  
Blackburn Central High School Community Use  
Witton Park Academy Community Use



For more information about these leisure centres please visit [www.refreshbwd.com](http://www.refreshbwd.com)

### What Activities?

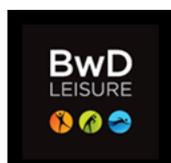
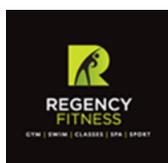
The Be Active card can be used for free access to the following activities.  
Casual bookings can be made 7 days in advance directly with the leisure centre.

Junior gym (12-15 year olds)  
Fitness Gym (for >16 years); gym induction is included  
Casual swimming  
Table tennis,  
Badminton  
Short tennis  
Casual football  
Low level fitness classes for juniors\*  
Fitness Classes (>16 years)

*\*Membership terms & conditions state:- 'Unless specified as a specific junior class, junior members of 12 or above can have access to selected low impact classes but only if they are accompanied by an adult, this can be on a 2:1 ratio max (two children to one adult).'*

Low level classes are:

Aerobics	Abs	Bodybalance	Zumba	Bokwa	Yoga
Swimfit	Bodyblast	Bums & Tums	Boxercise	Strictly Dance Fit	
Splash					



For information about the Be Active card please contact  
Leisure Development on [beezcard@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:beezcard@blackburn.gov.uk)