

**The Boys' Brigade**

**Development Plan**

**2013 to 2018**

**Faith in Young People**

# **The Boys' Brigade Mission Statement**

***“The Boys' Brigade: Faith in Young People”***

**The Boys' Brigade, through its programme of youth and children's work aims to:**

## **Engage:**

- providing opportunities for children and young people to meet together in their communities and engage in a range of fun and developmental activities
- empowering children and young people by involving them in decision making at all levels of the BB
- enabling children and young people to engage with the needs of others (especially other young people) locally, nationally and globally and encouraging them to participate in activities and projects in which they can make a difference

## **Partner**

- working in partnership with churches to encourage the development of a personal Christian faith
- finding partnerships within communities to meet the needs of children and young people
- creating opportunities to develop partnerships with other appropriate organisations and agencies

## **Support**

- being responsive to the needs and aspirations of all children and young people regardless of differing abilities, identities, backgrounds, gender or culture and providing appropriate support, advice and guidance
- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through the implementation of robust procedures for the selection, training and supervision of leaders
- providing high quality training and resources for leaders, and
- providing a network of professional staff to support and equip voluntary leaders for the task

## **Achievements of the past five years**

There have been many challenges for the Brigade in an economic climate where funding has been dramatically reduced in most regions. However, this has sharpened our focus on using the resources we have in creative and efficient ways and consequently there is much to celebrate from the past five years.

Specifically, we have made progress against our key aims as follows:

- In partnership with Brierley Consultancy we published a report into churches' perceptions of the BB and the status of youth work within churches. This has enabled us to target actions addressing aspects of our culture that were blocking our development in some areas. Subsequent publicity material created for churches, reflected the report's recommendations.
- We delivered a series of conferences in England and Scotland on the theme "Engage a Generation". Churches and community groups participated in these discussions which promoted the benefits and value of youth and children's work and improved the visibility of BB in these areas.
- A total of 17 Development Workers were recruited in England, Wales and Scotland with remits to support existing Companies and start new work. New Companies were started in all areas with Development Workers and existing Companies reported feeling better supported.
- We achieved Approved Centre status with City and Guilds. Two hundred of our leaders achieved qualifications in Youth Work and Playwork. This also developed our practice and generated more learning resources available to all leaders. Aspects of our training have been accredited by SQA and other agencies.
- Recruitment resources for young people and volunteers, along with "tool kits" for Companies were produced and have been used successfully.
- Resources for leaders and young people to explore the Christian faith have been developed
- 112 new Companies have been started in the period, some of them modelling new working methods and approaches.
- Our commitment to young people's participation was carried through by changing our Constitution to ensure that there are young people represented on all our decision making bodies.
- We have successfully begun the process of improving our PR profile and made good use of social media
- Through our membership of bodies such as YouthLink, NCVYS, and Youth United we have established excellent models of partnership working with other agencies.

In summary, we can identify good progress against our planned aims, and have a clear vision for what we now must now work towards in the next planning cycle.

## **Key Aims for 2013 to 2018**

Building on our achievements and having a clear vision for our future, we have structured our aims for the next five year period under the three areas of:

Growth, Quality and Voice

### **Growth**

We will continue to explore ways both to start new work and to grow existing Companies. As we become more confident and skilled in promoting our organisation to churches and communities we expect to see more success in these areas. Our aspiration is that every child and young person can access BB wherever they live.

#### **Actions:**

- To ensure sustainability of existing groups by providing support, resources, advice and challenge
- To build on the success of the 10% in 2012 Campaign with the launch of a “Growing Bigger, Growing Better” campaign for 2014 onwards. The target for growth in member numbers will be 10% year on year in all regions. This campaign will include volunteer recruitment
- To start new work both in churches and in other community facilities. Quantifiable targets for each region will be agreed
- To re-launch Amicus as a means of engaging with new churches and retaining teenagers already in membership.
- To explore the concept of development workers (paid or volunteer) in all Battalion areas to start new work and to support, retain and grow existing Companies.

#### **Outcomes:**

Increased capacity of local groups so that every child and young person can access the BB wherever they live.

Increased profile / knowledge of the Brigade with churches and across communities.

Increased number of volunteer leaders.

## **Quality**

Our focus in this area is to ensure that we provide the highest quality youth and children's work provision through equipping our leaders with the best possible skills, understanding and knowledge. Our aim is that children and young people accessing BB have a high quality experience that enables them to have fun, to achieve and to have the opportunity to participate fully at all levels of our organisation.

### **Actions:**

- To review the learning and leader development function throughout the Brigade.
- To improve access to learning and leader development by developing e-learning modules to complement face to face training. Learning modules to include safeguarding, good practice in youth work and playwork and management skills.
- Continuously to improve and update regularly programme materials for all sections.
- To ensure leaders feel confident and are equipped to assist young people on their spiritual journey.
- To give all Captains the opportunity to attend development training and investigate ways to follow up on actions taken as a result.
- To improve our communications with young people, leaders and staff so that everyone feels part of the whole and ensure we share ideas, innovations and good practice.
- To review our infrastructure (Battalions, Districts, Regions, UK/RoI) to ensure strong support to Companies locally and nationally.
- To ensure that our safeguarding procedures are robust and consistent by providing regular training and communications to leaders.
- To continue development of membership services and efficient administration processes.

### **Outcomes:**

Deliver the highest quality youth and children's work provision, and ensure that there is, as far as possible, an equal quality of experience across the Brigade.

A well trained and resourced volunteer workforce, with leaders equipped with resources, skills, understanding and knowledge.

Offer a fun and progressive programme at all levels of our organisation.

## **Voice**

Our aim in this area is to put our “Faith in Young People” strapline into practice. We are in the privileged position of representing over 50,000 young people who face a diverse range of challenges growing up in today’s world.

### **Actions:**

- To consult regularly with children and young people to identify what are the issues in their lives that present difficulties.
- To design and deliver participation models in all areas of our work to ensure members have real involvement in decision making.
- To work with young people to develop their advocacy and campaigning skills so that their voices are heard, both inside and outside of the BB.
- To agree national campaigns that young people can participate in at local and national levels and in which they can make a difference.
- When appropriate, to speak to Government or the media on the issues that affect young people.
- To consider opportunities to develop social enterprise models.

### **Outcomes:**

Establish the Brigade as a national “voice” for young people which can reflect the concerns and aspirations of our 50,000 young people.

Increased youth participation across the Brigade.

### **Strategies to achieve aims:**

Underpinning these targets will be detailed strategies, specifically a **Finance strategy**, a **Communications strategy** and a **PR strategy**. These strategies will identify actions to be taken and will be delegated by the Brigade Secretary to the appropriate staff member through the appraisal system. The staff member will use other staff and volunteers to deliver the strategic actions.

These strategies, established within the first year of the Development Plan, will form a separate action plan determining how the central function of the Brigade will support its delivery.

Regions will draw up work plans reflecting the aims of the Brigade Development Plan, addressing the key actions to deliver Growth, Quality and Voice.

## **Progress and Monitoring**

The Brigade Executive will receive regular reports on progress and there will be an annual review of the Development Plan which will be communicated to all staff and volunteers.