

Case study - Homework Club

The Homework Club (HWC) is run by the Broomhall Centre itself (as opposed to a partner organisation). It was begun by volunteers in the 1980s and is currently supported by the University of Sheffield. They pay for the coordinator, Emily Hearne, who recruits university students (currently eight volunteers). Thus it brings together undergraduates (and two university staff who continue to help long after they graduated) and local young people, benefiting both parties. One of our Board members provides IT



support: access to lap tops and a printer are vital resources for children who do not have them at home. We see the HWC as part of our core work and have subsidised it when external grants have run low. Parents pay a small weekly amount per child.

There are about 40 children on the books. Most are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) from the local area. Ages range from 8 – 18 years, getting help with reading and spelling through to GCSE revision and A-level course work.

The Homework Club offers:

- a friendly, sociable, relaxed environment to support young people with their homework and any other school/education related concerns/questions they may have.
- small group and 1-1 mentoring from volunteers in specific academic subjects
- free resources (printing, stationary, art materials)
- social & emotional support to children and also in some cases parents
- an established club that locals know runs every Thursday, and that there'll always be a place where they can come.

Examples of tailored help for individuals:

- A student with Cystic Fibrosis and Epilepsy who has missed chunks of schooling. Emily set up extra volunteer sessions outside HWC hours for 1-1 tuition and tutored him herself throughout lockdown.
- Support for young people who hadn't yet found school places after returning from Somalia.
- Support with CVs - writing skills and personal statements for university & further study

Projects with partners:

- Trip to the Town Hall to meet (Somali-born) mayor Magid Magid. The kids got a chance to ask questions about his experiences and tour the chambers. Organised alongside Unity Gym (which runs the Boys Youth Group at the Broomhall Centre).
- Visit to the Alfred Denny Museum at the University. Organised with a volunteer who works at the University. The museum is sort of a medical, cabinet of curiosity style museum full of weird and wonderful things.

- Workshops in screen printing & spoken word, run by a volunteer studying at The University of Leeds, which led to some of the young people developing an interest in creative writing.
- A “Food Fest” (cooking competition) in February half term 2020 with “Hunger Project” funds to provide young people with a healthy meal when they’re not at school. Run in collaboration with Shipshape (local partner) and the Youth Groups.



During lockdown we continued to employ Emily who reports:

- Helped a student who didn’t get into her university of choice to research job opportunities and put applications together. She finally decided on a foundation course with the hope of getting into University next year. I provided her with practical support and emotional support. We talked about her many options and how not getting into Uni this year wasn’t the end of the world. This student also improved her grades in her final assignments from college to gain all Distinctions in Health & Social Care with the help of volunteers.
- Partnered with the university & girl’s group through lockdown to run a book club for young women of colour, reading texts exclusively written by women of colour. The kids have been involved in designing a logo, picking a name (The Lit Collective Sheffield) and the texts.



Quotes:

From a student: *‘I’ve been coming to HWC since I was in Y5 so 6 years. It helped me become the woman I am today. It helped me meet deadlines for the last 312 weeks. I am thankful ... because I rely on it for my studies and enjoy it’*

From Emily (HWC coordinator): *‘The Broomhall Centre is a vital resource of support, warmth and engagement for the local community of Broomhall but also the wider population of Sheffield... The young people who attend the homework club have enriched my life, as the club coordinator, in so many ways ... Not only does the centre benefit the local community but it has also been a vital part of my professional development over the last four years ... As a freelance artist I spend my time working with various organisations, none as supportive as the Broomhall Centre. Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, board members have gone above and beyond to support me as a member of staff, and allowed me to explore different ways of working in this unexpected situation.’*