



ANNUAL

REVIEW

2023

Funded by



Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund

Delivered by



The Fund's flagship programme supporting young people in the RAF Community



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WELCOME FROM SIMON



Having served over 34 years in the RAF, including as Station Commander at RAF Halton and Deputy Air Officer Commanding 22 Group, I know first-hand the benefit that the Fund's Airplay and Ben Club programmes deliver to the children, young people, and parents of the RAF Family.

Whether it be investing many millions of pounds into new childcare facilities and play parks or delivering the Airplay programme, The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund has been at the forefront of supporting serving families over many years. As the Fund enters the third year of partnership with One YMCA to deliver Airplay on our behalf, I am delighted to report and reflect on the continuing success of the programme.

The quality of support provided by the Station Youth Workers across 24 RAF Stations is excellent. Airplay members continue to tell us that Airplay is a fun, safe and exciting environment where they can develop themselves and make new friends. I am also pleased that RAF parents overwhelmingly agree Airplay provides a space where their children feel they belong and advance in confidence.

As we approach Airplay's 15th birthday in 2025, the Fund will continue its commitment to the serving community. I want Airplay to build on its successes and reach as many children and young people as we can. Keeping up with an RAF that is busy operationally at home and overseas is at the forefront of what we do, and support to the serving families has never been more important.

Throughout 2024 we look forward to engaging the Airplay Youth Forum and Young Leaders to better understand how we can expand the provision and provide the high quality and enjoyable experience our young people have been used to and which this annual report articulates so well.

Air Commodore Simon Harper

Director Grants, Services and Programmes



WELCOME FROM GUY



This year saw the popularity of the Airplay Programme grow by 16% - proving the incredible worth of face-to-face activities and clubs, even in this digital age.

Of course, because of the national and international spread of RAF bases and the diaspora, much of the inter-base collaboration (and competition) does happen online and it was a pleasure to be part of the inaugural Airplay Youth Awards, seeing so many achievements and smiling faces on screen!

Huge gratitude goes out to all of the YMCA Airplay teams, RAF Community Development and Support Teams, partners, volunteers, and youth leaders who have gone above and beyond over the last year to provide amazing opportunities and high-quality activities for our Airplay members. And of course, to the RAF Benevolent Fund for their continued commitment to children and young people from RAF families.

It has also been wonderful to see the Airplay programme recognised nationally: being a finalist at the national Youth Matters Awards for "Family and Youth Work Project of the Year" and one of our inspiring young members, Jess, being shortlisted in the "Young Leader" category at the Children and Young People Now Awards.

I have been hugely impressed with the young people I've met at the annual Youth Forum. People talk about young people being "the future", but at YMCA we believe they are also "the present" and have opinions and ideas of incredible power and relevance right now. Because of this, I'm thrilled we are starting a new Young Leader Training package to help some of Airplay's members learn even more effective ways to share and influence, so they can fly even higher.

This Annual Review celebrates the incredible impact that Airplay has had in 2023 and showcases some of the outstanding children and young people we've worked with.

Guy Foxell

Chief Executive Officer
One YMCA



ABOUT AIRPLAY



Airplay is the RAF Benevolent Fund's flagship youth support programme for children and young people in RAF families.

The programme is delivered by a consortium of YMCA across

England, Wales, and Scotland in conjunction with RAF Community Support at each site.

Airplay sets out to fulfil the vision of the RAF Benevolent Fund that everyone in our RAF family gets support in their hour of need. It does this by creating a community where young people can belong, contribute, and thrive and develop their full potential in body, mind, and spirit.

Young people in RAF families face a unique set of challenges, often experiencing frequent change of home, school, and friendship groups. Additionally, there is the challenge that comes with having parents out of area for long periods of time or on overseas deployment.

Airplay is now in its thirteenth year supporting young people through these challenges by providing safe, consistent, and exciting play and youth work activities across 24 RAF Stations and now online through Airplay

Connect. Wherever a member's journey takes them, Airplay is there to provide much needed continuity and a trained team of supportive and fun youth workers.



We pledge to provide:

Groups where you feel you BELONG

Opportunities for you to CONTRIBUTE

Support that empowers you to THRIVE

Activities that enable you to CONNECT



LOCATIONS

ONE YMCA

- RAF Benson
- RAF Brize Norton
- RAF High Wycombe (including Medmenham)
- RAF Halton
- RAF Henlow
- RAF Valley
- RAF Shawbury

YMCA TRINITY

- RAF Honington
- RAF Wittering
- RAF Wyton

YMCA LINCOLNSHIRE

- RAF Coningsby
- RAF Cranwell
- RAF Digby
- RAF Scampton
- RAF Waddington

YMCA FAIRTHORNE

- MOD Boscombe Down
- RAF Odiham

YMCA BLACK COUNTRY

- RAF Cosford

YMCA NORTHUMBERLAND

- RAF Boulmer

YMCA NORTH TYNESIDE

- RAF Leeming

YMCA SCOTLAND

- RAF Lossiemouth

YMCA NORFOLK

- RAF Marham

YMCA ST PAUL'S GROUP

- RAF Northolt

YMCA CORNWALL

- RAF St Mawgan



2023 KEY STATS



2,097

children and young people actively engaged in Airplay activities

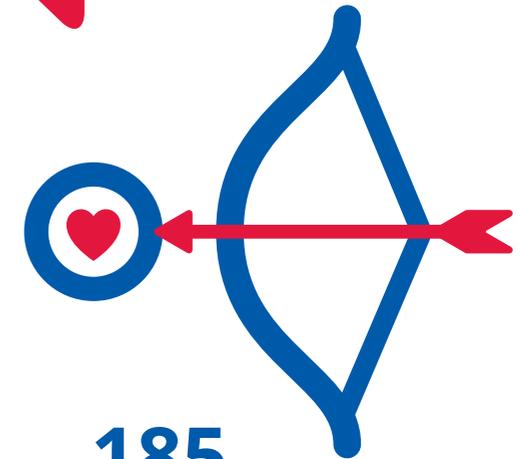


4,030

sessions delivered

195

youth forums empowering members to have their voices heard

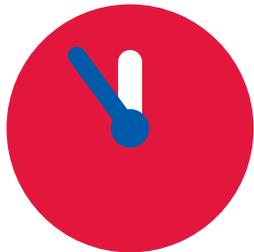


185

members attended our AirBreaks adventure residential

30

Young leaders graduated our Young Leader Programme



7,493

hours of activities



38,052

attendances at Airplay activities

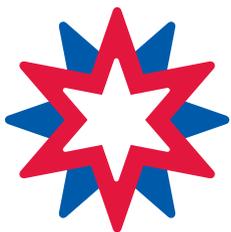


85

young people directly involved in the applications for Airplay Special Projects funding

43

members nominated for an Airplay Youth Award



Airplay shortlisted for **2** national youth awards

Key Aim 1

BELONG



My daughter loves the freedom that Airplay gives her... I know she is happy, enjoying herself, socialising and more than anything, she is still safe."

- Airplay Wittering parent

In 2023, Airplay provided groups where young people can belong.

Airplay provided over 2,000 members a safe space where they could be themselves, with dedicated youth workers to talk to.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

96% of parents agree that Airplay provides their child with somewhere they feel that they belong.

98% of members feel that Airplay provides them with somewhere to go where they feel safe.

Members rated Airplay 4.6 out of 5.



Be Myself

Airplay supports young people to be themselves and develop their understanding of others.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

Airplay Odiham members created an inspirational wall display of their values that takes pride of place in their building. They chose curiosity, compassion, and respect!

Airplay Waddington members' discussions around inclusivity led to a fiercely competitive game of sitting volleyball – an adapted game so all of their members could get involved.

87% of parents feel that Airplay takes into account their children's individual needs and preferences.

[The thing I like the most is] just going along and feeling comfortable to enjoy myself, it makes me feel like I am part of a community."

Airplay Waddington member, aged 11

Young People Feel Safe

Airplay provides a safe space for members to attend and delivers activities that help young people to keep themselves safe.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

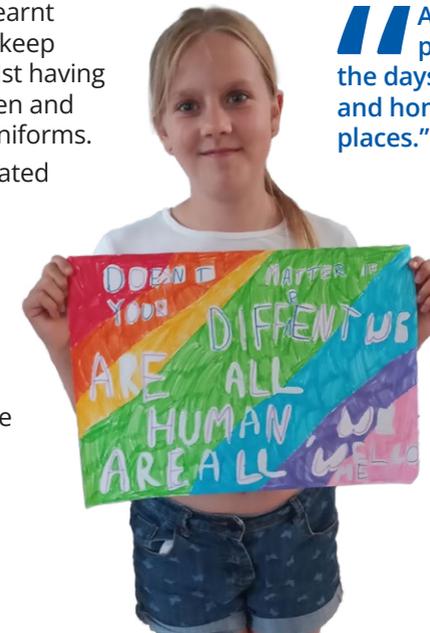
Airplay Boscombe Down organised a visit for their members from the local police service. They learnt about ways they can keep themselves safe, whilst having their fingerprints taken and even trying out the uniforms.

Airplay Halton celebrated World Pride Day with their young people, exploring what the day signifies and paying tribute to differences and preferences through the creation of a Pride welcome banner and notice board.

89% of members agree that that they feel listened to at Airplay.

Airplay is my favourite place to be. I just count the days until youth club. Here and home are my happy places."

Airplay Digby member



Belong Case Study

CALEB

Caleb, aged 10, began attending the junior session at Cosford towards the end of 2022. He was initially shy and reserved during the sessions, opting to sit on the sidelines and watch the others members participate in the activities. The Airplay team encouraged Caleb to get involved with the group at his own pace, and in ways he felt comfortable. They discussed with Caleb specific roles that he felt he was able to take on to build his confidence and sense of purpose in the group. This started with calling the group when activities were ready, and soon progressed to Caleb taking an active role in running the tuck shop.

Over time it became clear that, through these additional responsibilities, Caleb felt more involved and integrated. He expressed that having a role to play when he didn't feel confident enough to participate in the activity helped him to feel safe and gave him a sense of belonging. Caleb became more involved in Airplay activities and events.



“ I love going to youth club and doing all the activities. The staff are all great. I hope they do a residential again, as it was so much fun and I spent time with my friends.”

Caleb

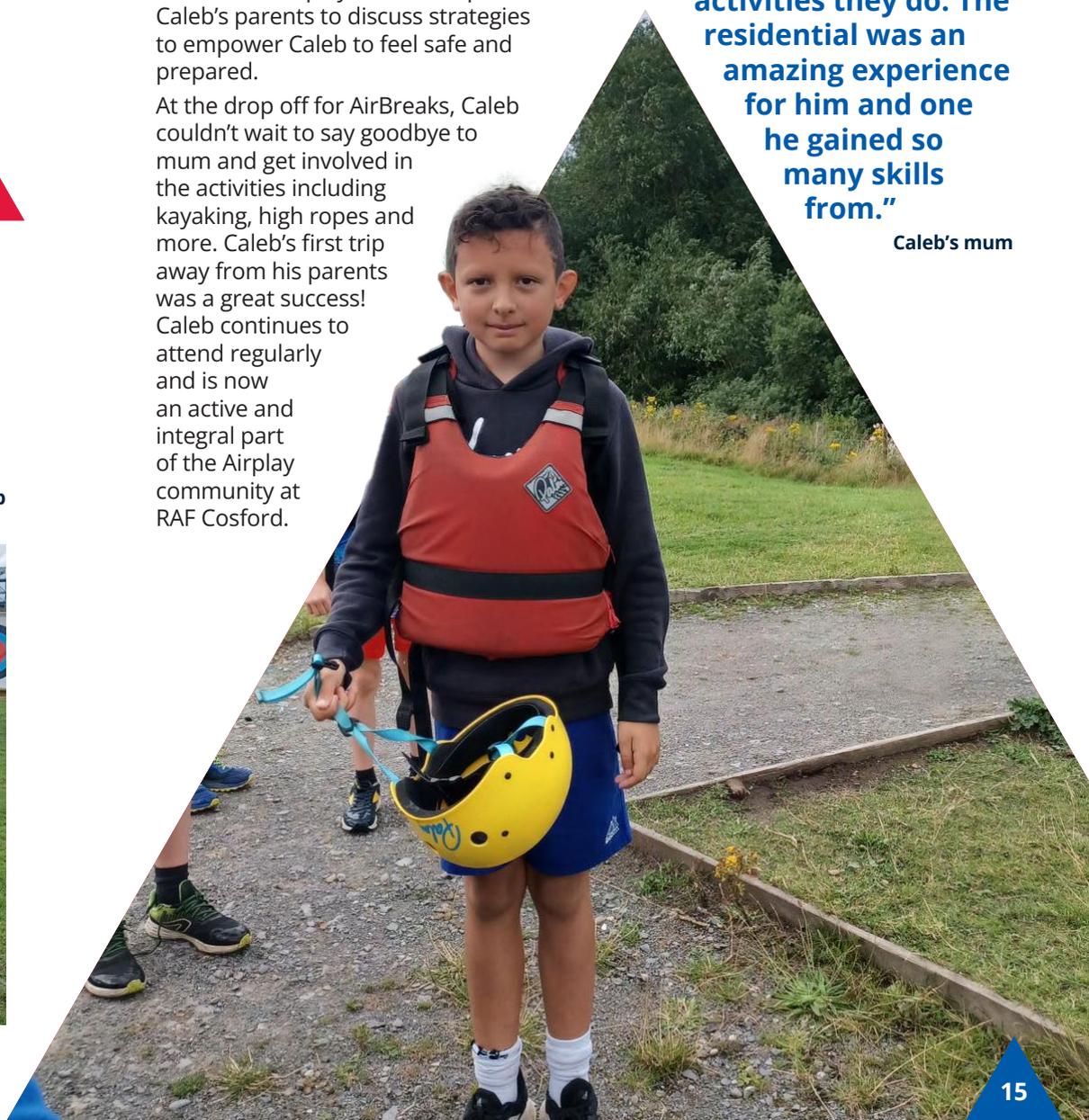


When the opportunity came up to attend the AirBreaks residential in the summer holidays, Caleb was excited to attend but needed some additional reassurance. The other Airplay members actively encouraged him to attend with them, offering their support during the residential. Airplay staff met up with Caleb's parents to discuss strategies to empower Caleb to feel safe and prepared.

At the drop off for AirBreaks, Caleb couldn't wait to say goodbye to mum and get involved in the activities including kayaking, high ropes and more. Caleb's first trip away from his parents was a great success! Caleb continues to attend regularly and is now an active and integral part of the Airplay community at RAF Cosford.

“ Airplay has helped improve Caleb's confidence so much. He can't wait to get there on a Tuesday for the fun activities they do. The residential was an amazing experience for him and one he gained so many skills from.”

Caleb's mum



Key Aim 2

CONTRIBUTE



In 2023 Airplay provided **opportunities for young people to contribute.**

Airplay members took on responsibility and shaped the project and their community. This has been demonstrated through youth forums, consultations, community initiatives, thematic projects and more.

“Airplay allows them to interact with friends and other young people who they wouldn’t usually in a safe and friendly environment. They get a chance to share ideas and have their opinions valued. As parents we feel assured and confident in the Airplay programme and we are hugely grateful that our children are able to access such groups.”

Airplay Wittering Parent



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

673 attendances at Airplay youth forums, empowering members to have their say and influence the project.

15 grants given to youth led initiatives through Airplay’s Special Project Fund – directly benefitting over 550 members.

Airplay Members Have Responsibilities

Airplay empowers young people to take the lead and get involved in decision making around the things that matter most to them.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

When Airplay Marham members got the keys to their new building, the inters group got busy making the space their own. After working with the youth workers on a wish list, they helped build and move the new furniture and create a welcoming space for their peers.

Airplay St Mawgan members took responsibility for their local community by arranging a litter picking day on the nearby beach with the Newquay Marine Group.



Over **2,000** attendances from 53 Airplay Youth Volunteers providing peer support at Airplay clubs.

“Volunteering at Airplay has impacted my life for the better in so many ways including helping improve my confidence, social skills, and my ability to speak to people of all ages. It has helped me learn skills that I will take and use throughout my whole life. It has even helped me get a job.”

Airplay Boscombe Down Member, aged 16

Young People Able to Speak

Airplay encourages young people to share their opinion, respect the voice of others and have their say and influence both individually and as a group.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

Airplay Bensons session exploring childhood around the world inspired members to apply for Special Project Funding. They chose to sponsor a child in a developing country for two years.

Airplay Wyton members saw that the local MUGA had been the victim of some horrible graffiti. Their Senior group, supported by the youth workers, decided to take some action. They cleaned up the area, making it feel fresh and welcoming for young people.

87% of members agree they have a direct say in the activities that are delivered at their Airplay project.

“I love Airplay. I feel welcome and I know I can have a say and the staff will listen. They help when I’m sad too because sometimes things are hard.”

Airplay Scampton Member, aged 12

CONTRIBUTE Case Study

KATIE

Katie joined Airplay at RAF Benson, aged 8. Initially she found it quite overwhelming - sessions were busy and she was quite reserved. After a few months of attending, and with support from the staff team, Katie began to feel safe and confident enough to come out of her shell and she started getting actively involved in the Airplay offer. When Katie turned 11 she became a founding member of a new Benson Airplay Youth Forum.

“There were free donuts, and that was why I went initially, but I went back because I liked the idea of helping people.”

Katie

“When I got to RAF Henlow I helped to set up a youth forum there. They had one but it needed some senior magic! We ran some events on Station like Real Life Cluedo and a King’s Coronation celebration.”

Katie

Through this role Katie helped to interview new Youth Forum members and sat on the panel when recruiting new Airplay staff. She also played a key role in organising trips, collecting member feedback and driving forward youth led projects.

Katie’s family moved to RAF Henlow when she was 12 and she transferred to the Airplay project there. She again demonstrated her desire to contribute to the community and provide a place for young people to have a voice.



Katie was also involved in fundraising and organising a ‘Dining In’ night where Airplay members joined up with the Station Commander and other dignitaries for a lunch event. This has now become an annual occurrence on Station!

It was a natural step for Katie to apply to be a part of the Annual Youth Forum, which she attended in both 2022 and 2023. She was part of the team signing off on Special Project applications in both years. In 2022 she pushed forward the Airplay Green Gardening Project and the Monthly Airplay Challenge. In 2023 Katie advocated for the Young People’s Awards and Young Leader hoodies, which have also now come to fruition.



“I went to the national youth forums both years and it was good to go back and see that the people in charge had listened to our ideas and done something and that it had made an impact.”

Katie



Katie is now 13 and still a member of the Airplay Henlow club and Youth Forum where she represents her peers as a Young Leader. She continues to make an important contribution to Airplay and it’s members, both locally and nationally. Katie recently received a Station Commanders Coin for her service and support to the young people of RAF Henlow!

Key Aim 3

THRIVE



In 2023 Airplay provided support that enabled young people to thrive. Through exciting and diverse programmes, Airplay challenged young people to fulfil their potential and encouraged them to try new experiences.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

91% of parents feel that Airplay is helping their child to be more confident.

76% of members feel that Airplay has helped them to try new things.

“My little boy loves it, it’s a brilliant distraction when his dad is away and when he isn’t, there’s still a strong family feel. He comes out happy every week, he’s always excited for the next session, and the staff are amazing.”

Airplay Lossiemouth Parent



Young People Feel More Confident

Airplay accepts young people where they are at and actively seeks to build their self-esteem and grow in confidence.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

Airplay Cranwell young people decided to take to the screens to demonstrate their Strictly Come Dancing skills by creating a series of dance tutorials for other Airplay projects to get involved with.

Airplay Valley young volunteers grew in confidence by planning and delivering activities at RAF Valley’s family funday.

82% of members feel that through attending Airplay they have grown in confidence.

“My daughter cannot wait for another session of Airplay. She absolutely loves it. Since she started Airplay, she became very open, made lots of friends and I can see that she became more confident.”

Airplay Wyton Parent

Young People Grow and Develop Skills for the Future

Airplay provides opportunities for young people to learn and develop both practical and interpersonal skills.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

Airplay Coningsby delivered a regular cooking club, building new relationships across age ranges, with older members acting as peer mentors. Young people developed their independent living skills alongside healthy eating awareness.

Airplay Northolt members took an active part in recruiting their Youth Workers. They arranged a youth panel to interview the candidates, giving their feedback and opinions to YMCA and the RAF on who to appoint.

60% of members feel that Airplay has helped them to do things outside of their comfort zone.

“[The staff] make sure that the young people have a safe and fun time. Our children are constantly learning new skills. I am reassured that if needed, my children would feel confident talking to the staff.”

Airplay Cosford Parent



THRIVE Case Study

AIRPLAY

BRIZE NORTON'S

YOUTH CAFÉ

Airplay Brize Norton successfully launched a Youth Café in the local community Families Club, led by Airplay members.

9 members completed food hygiene and first aid training as preparation for running the Café. As their first job, they were asked to coordinate the food for Carterton's Coronation Party. They organised the party, preparing over 100 meals for children and young people in the Youth Café, as well as delivering a range of activities.

The Café project helped my daughter's confidence grow as she was asked to provide the homemade cakes for the café. On day one, they all sold out and she came home beaming and excited to bake her next batch. The project has opened many opportunities for her and without the project I don't think she would have had confidence to branch out and bake for others."

Parent Airplay Brize Norton



The community were so impressed by the Youth Café that they were asked to serve and prepare food for the new Mayor of Carterton's Meet and Greet event. Working to a strict budget they planned and prepared a range of canapes and dressed up in their smart clothes to serve the Mayor and local dignitaries.

"I was overwhelmed by the responsible and professional attitudes of the young people. Their manners and general respect for others while they served was impeccable."

Mayor of Carterton



Key Aim 4

CONNECT



In 2023 Airplay delivered **activities for young people to connect**. Airplay provided continuity for members and opportunities to build their networks and make new friends.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

66% of members feel Airplay has helped them cope when their parents have been away with work.

96% of parents agree Airplay staff are friendly and welcoming.

Parents rated Airplay **4.5** out of **5**.

What I like most about Airplay is the welcoming atmosphere and the fact that it's a constant in the constantly changing life as a military child."

Airplay Henlow Member, aged 14



Young People Meet New People and Make New Friends

Airplay brings opportunities for young people to build new friendships and connect with others from their community in a positive way.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

Airplay Leeming members got a chance to connect with the wider Station personnel through their Airplay Leeming vs the RAF project. Various teams from different RAF sections and SSAFA took on the members in a range of challenges and games, building competitive spirit and relationships.

Airplay Wittering took home the inaugural FAirplay trophy after taking part in an online FIFA tournament involving six Airplay projects as part of Airplay's online offer. 'Going on to represent Wittering and bringing it home was a great journey!' Joe, Airplay Wittering.



83% of members feel that Airplay has helped them to make new friends.

On a base that is in an isolated location it gives the kids somewhere to go with friends that is safe and supervised. The staff get to know each child and they are made to feel welcome."

Airplay Leeming parent

Young People Feel Comfortable and Supported

Airplay will provide a community that is supportive of it's members and does all it can to make sure everyone feels comfortable to get involved.

LOCAL EXAMPLES

Airplay Henlow members enjoyed their annual Dining In night at the Officers mess. They were served by the Station Warrant Officer and joined by the Station Commander. The Airplay Henlow Youth Forum put weeks of planning into the event that built community spirit and demonstrated the value of Airplay.

Airplay Scampton teamed up with Airplay Waddington for a visit from Shine Lincolnshire. The members explored what 'wellbeing' means to them and what other services and clubs are out there in their communities for support.

71% of members agree that Airplay has helped them to settle in when they have moved to a new Station.

Whatever RAF base we go to there is an Airplay. This has a huge sense of familiarity for our child. This helped with my child making friends and feeling part of our new community."

Airplay Boscombe Down Parent

CONNECT Case Study

AIRPLAY WADDINTON'S VETERAN EVENT

Airplay Waddington members got involved in UK Youth's Inspire Social Action Project, successfully pitching their idea of a cross generational Veterans and Airplay Event.

Airplay members worked with the staff to plan, prepare and deliver an event that brought young people and RAF veterans together for an evening of activity and sharing. Members took on specific roles on the events

team including front of house, activity lead, bingo caller, waiting on staff and chef. Attended by 15 local veterans, as well as staff from the RAF Benevolent Fund, RAF and YMCA, the event was a huge success. Everyone got involved in sharing afternoon tea, games and activities as well as witnessing a Red Arrows display (involving homemade Red Arrow costumes!).



“I said hi to people at the door. I was bit nervous about speaking to strangers and whether or not the grown ups would listen to me. But they did and they were nice. I would do it again. Not just because I won lots of prizes!”

Airplay Waddington Member

It was an event that raised the profile of young people, empowered them to take on responsibilities and brought together communities that may not have otherwise interacted.



“I didn't quite know what to expect when we were invited to come to this event, but I'm blown away. What a wonderful example these young people set. I can see that they've worked hard. They are lucky to have the chance to do things like this. Airplay sounds like something many children could benefit from.”

RAF Veteran



SPOTLIGHT ON AIRBREAKS

The Airplay AirBreaks residential took place in the summer of 2023 at the JCA Adventure Centre in Shropshire. Young people from 18 Airplay projects (and from RAF Stations without a local Airplay) came together for 3 days of exciting and challenging adventures.

Airplay members were supported by a team of committed staff and volunteers from YMCA and RAF Community Support as they took on activities including tag archery, lazer maze, high ropes, and raft building.

185 Airplay members aged 8 – 16 attended the AirBreak - travelling from across the UK - from as far north as RAF Lossiemouth, east as RAF Marham and west as RAF Valley, to create the biggest Airplay residential yet!



“ I love Airplay because it just makes you feel at home, when everyone is with you it’s one of the best experiences ever. The kayaking activity has been my favourite at the Airbreak – just swimming about and throwing each other in the water! It’s so much fun.”

Airplay Marham Member,
aged 14



It was an amazing adventure with new friendships and connections created for both Airplay members and the support staff. Members even rekindled friendships. Joe and Ed were both based at RAF Leeming when they were younger. After having both moved away, seeing each other years later at AirBreaks gave them the opportunity to reconnect.

“ Airplay made it possible for me to reconnect with Ed. I had not seen him for nearly six years due to postings to different areas.”

Joe, aged 15

“ Moving around the country can be extremely difficult for families. We think our children will be fine and make new friends, this is often the case, but they never forget about the friends that they left behind. Airplay made it possible for Joe and Ed to reconnect after many years. What an amazing team of people to be able to bring old friends back together again.”

Joe’s mum

49% of members agreed that Airplay has enabled them to keep in touch with friends from other Stations.

18% increase during the AirBreaks residential in young people ‘feeling that they have a voice in the group’ and ‘feeling able to be themselves.’

16% increase during the AirBreaks residential in young people ‘feeling confident in the group’ and ‘being able to make new friends’.



SPOTLIGHT ON

YOUTH-LED SPECIAL PROJECTS

2023 saw Airplay members getting involved in youth-led social action including fundraising, campaigning and improving their communities. To enable young people to push forward their own initiatives, Airplay provided access to Special Project grants. Projects were based on the top themes young people selected in the Airplay Members Surveys:

- Health and Wellbeing
- The Environment
- Personal Safety

Funding requests were completed directly by members through written applications, videos and voice notes. Applications were reviewed by the Airplay National Youth Forum, who signed off on the final allocation of funds. The Youth Forum acted as an expert panel, offering recommendations and even increasing funding where they felt it would have the greatest impact.



£9,000 of funding was allocated to 15 Special Projects. These included developing new Young Leaders hoodies, youth self defense and first aid training, developing community and green spaces, and purchasing resources and activities focused on promoting wellbeing.

Over 85 members were involved in the application process with over 550 benefitting directly from their initiatives.

“I am grateful to be able to sponsor someone who needs our help.”

Airplay Benson Member, aged 9 talking about the ‘sponsor a child’ special project

“It was fun painting the cooldown room. It was made to help people. I feel happy and great knowing that people are using it.”

Airplay Henlow Member, aged 9 talking about the ‘cooldown room’ Special Project, a safe place for young people to have some quiet time, relax and destress if feeling overwhelmed



WHAT'S NEXT?

- ▶ Members have chosen themes of Military Life, The Environment and Healthy Relationships.
- ▶ Special Projects launches again in April 2024.

SPOTLIGHT ON

ANNUAL YOUTH FORUM

Airplay delivered consultations, member surveys, youth-led initiatives, social action projects and youth forums ensuring youth voice remains at the heart of the programme.

The Annual Youth Forum saw Airplay members come together in London for three days of sharing, learning and decision making. They presented on behalf of their peers to the RAFBF, RAF and YMCA, highlighting opportunities, ventures and ambitions for the project. They also had a great time seeing the sites and developing their independent living skills.

“I learnt to do stuff on my own and not rely on other people. I really loved cooking for everyone in the flat.”

Annual Youth Forum member, age 14



AIRPLAY YOUNG PEOPLE'S AWARDS

The inaugural Airplay Young People's Awards took place in November. Categories included - Role Model, Social Activist and Outstanding Contribution. Parents, staff, members, and dignitaries joined online to celebrate the achievements of Airplay members.

Chloe, aged 15, from Wittering presented the Social Activist Award -

“Everyone listened patiently, it felt easy to talk. I didn't feel anyone was looking down on me because of my age.”

Over 50 members were nominated and all the categories were highly contested.



“I can't believe I was even nominated, let alone won. I never win anything.”

Airplay Coningsby Award Winner

“[Airplay Youth Forums] are a great opportunity for young people to put themselves out there, share their ideas and aspects on things, and build up confidence and other good skills.”

Airplay Shawbury member, aged 13

Annual Youth Forum Members showed:

51% growth in feeling confident.

42% growth in taking responsibility.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- ▶ The Annual Annual Youth Forum is set for August 2024.
- ▶ The Airplay Young People's Awards will run again in November 2024.

SPOTLIGHT ON

YOUNG LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS

In 2023 Airplay members showed their commitment to Airplay, giving their time as Youth Volunteers or taking on the role of Young Leader at their projects. These members provided vital support to the staff and volunteers – contributing to planning and delivering sessions, running tuck shops, peer mentoring and representing Airplay at local and national events.



Coningsby and Wittering and is now an active part of Airplay's youth voice offer. 30 members successfully completed the programme in 2023, developing their skills as role models and earning Airplay Young Leader

status. They are all eligible for their bespoke purple Airplay Young Leader hoodie.

Airplay salutes all the members who take on these roles – you are inspirational.

One of our Airplay Young Leaders even attended the National Children and Young People Now Awards in London where they were shortlisted for the Childrens Achievement Award for their contributions, activism and fundraising through Airplay.

2023 saw the launch of the new Airplay Young Leader training course. The 6 week programme was piloted at



“I have learnt many skills that will eventually help me throughout my life. I have learnt from mistakes and helped others not make the same mistakes as me. I have gained most of my confidence from this experience. Not only that but initiative, when to ask for help, but also knowing what to do on my own. I am very grateful for having experienced all this over the past three years of volunteering at Airplay.”

Airplay Boscombe Down Member, aged 16

2050 attendances as Youth Volunteers at Airplay sessions.

56 Airplay Young Volunteers.

30 Airplay members graduated as Young Leaders.

“It has really helped my confidence and allowed me to add something extra for job and university applications as well.”

Airplay Coningsby Young Leader



WHAT'S NEXT?

- ▶ Look out for those purple hoodies! Now they have been signed off by the Youth Forum, they are ready to be shipped out to Airplay Young Leaders.

SPOTLIGHT ON

AIRPLAY CONNECT

2023 saw further development of Airplay's online offer to young people on its exclusive website airplayconnect.org.

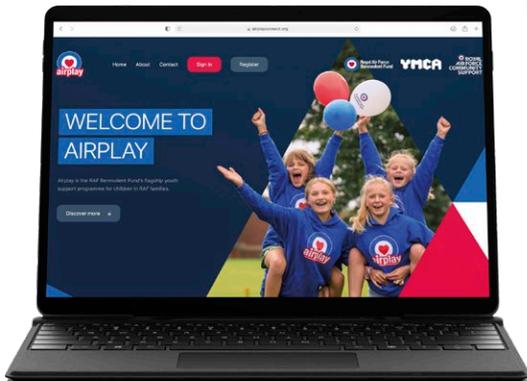
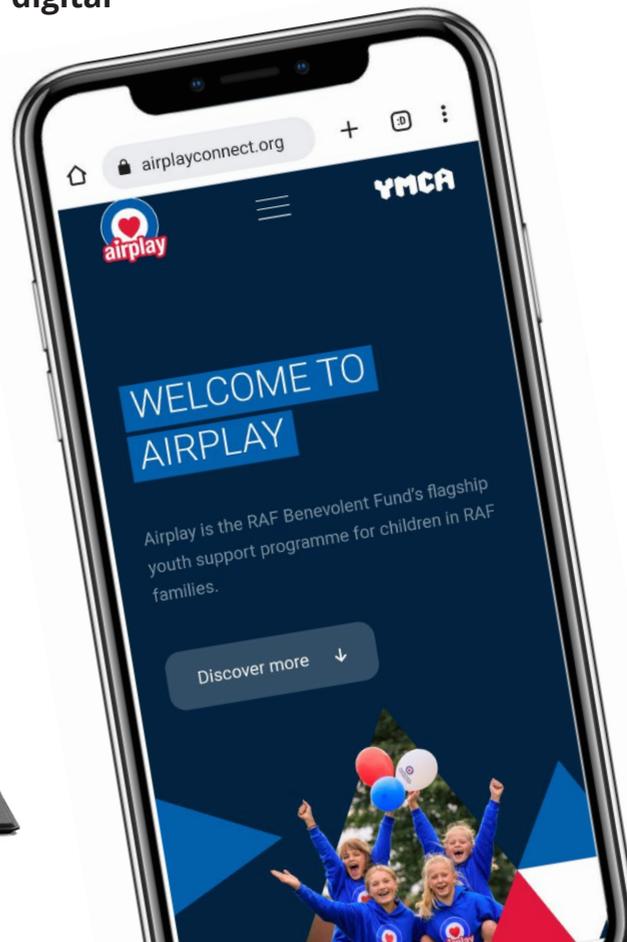
Airplay Connect is a safe and secure platform for parents and members to find out what is happening across Airplay, sign up to activities, get support and access a range of digital content and virtual sessions.

Airplay Connect extends the projects reach beyond the face to face provision. It means that wherever an RAF family moves to there is an Airplay offer available.

Virtual sessions have covered a range of themes and topics including health and fitness, STEM, sustainability, youth voice and animation. Ongoing consultation with young people led to an increase in attendance through the year through a more bespoke



airplayconnect.org



programme. Sessions such as the Sketchathon Social and the Digital Wellbeing Drop In brought together Airplay groups and individuals with shared passions. The introduction of a regular gaming session, Minecraft Madness, enabled members from across Airplay projects and the diaspora to play together on a dedicated server with each other and Airplay staff.

Airplay Connect has also been used to strengthen connections and networks across the project with online Youth Forums and pre residential briefings. The first ever Airplay Young People's Awards also took place online with a brilliant turnout from individuals and even whole Airplay groups joining directly from their clubs!



“I didn't know how to draw but I really enjoyed it!”

Airplay Benson Member, aged 7 about the Sketchathon Social session

“It has been great for us to use Airplay Connect within an Airplay session, the children thoroughly enjoyed it and have asked when they can do it again.”

Airplay Station Youth Worker

50 live sessions were delivered throughout the year and additionally, 24 videos were created by members and staff teams specifically for the platform.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- ▶ Continue to connect members from across Airplay online by delivering Airplay Young Leader training, Youth Forums and the Young People's Awards on Airplay Connect.
- ▶ Maintain a consistent weekly online offer including regular gaming groups, issue based sessions and interactive workshops.

THANK YOU...

- ▶ **to the Wimbledon Foundation, the MacRobert Trust, and Mr and Mrs Blower** who all contribute to the RAF Benevolent Fund directly to support the Airplay programme.
- ▶ **to the RAF Community Development and Support Teams** whose dedication and support enable Airplay to operate successfully at each base.
- ▶ **to the 11 YMCAs** whose staff and volunteers work tirelessly to deliver the projects day in day out across the UK.
- ▶ **to the hundreds of parents and carers** who get involved, provide feedback, and support their children to access Airplay.
- ▶ **to the thousands of children and young people** who make Airplay such a wonderful place to be.

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The RAF Benevolent Fund is proud to have invested over £40 million into the Children and Young People of the Royal Air Force over the past 20 years. From childcare centres, play parks, our listening and counselling service and of course the youth work of Airplay. The Fund is loyal, generous, and always there for the RAF Family.

Please contact us today if you know a member of the RAF Family who is need of support or to request help for yourself.

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