

**DRUG ACTION TEAM**  
**2004 ONE OFF PROJECTS**  
**REPORT .**

## **Halton & Warrington Youth Offending Team** **Drug & Alcohol Awareness Project**

In December 2003, Halton Drug Action Team made £10,000 available to the YOT for additional interventions/resources to address substance misuse.

The broad aims behind the interventions were to:-

1. Offer activities that promote social inclusion, reduce anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.
2. Enable the DAT to assess the viability of funding further activities aimed at preventing or reducing substance misuse and crime.

The local arts councils were consulted and a company called 'Roundmidnight' were commissioned to provide the project. The method used was forum theatre, enabling young people to see the link between drug use and criminal activity. However, they could also influence the outcome by freezing the action and re-directing it.

Research was completed around cannabis and its re-classification with regard to current laws and risks/effects. Alcohol was also flagged as a relevant educational subject due to its effects on behaviour etc.

Due to the increased experimental use in the borough, it was felt that the target age should be 12-13yr olds, in a school setting. Target schools included Fairfield High School, Widnes – Halton High School, Runcorn and St Chads High School, Runcorn. Further evening venues were used to ensure vulnerable young people from the YOT could attend. This attendance was extended to Connexions, Arch Initiatives, Social Services and Educational Welfare Services.

### ***Evaluation Breakdown***

Attendance -	385 young people
Gender breakdown	(28) 7% unknown gender
	(158) 41% males
	(199) 52% females

### ***Females' thoughts on things learnt from workshop***

Poor	3%
Ok	7%
Good	48%
Excellent	42%

### ***Males' thoughts on things learnt from workshop***

Poor	8%
Ok	31%
Good	43%
Excellent	18%

### ***Comments from the Young People***

Just don't try it.  
Drugs and alcohol are addictive  
1 unit takes one hour to get out of your blood stream  
Drugs wreck lives  
Cannabis is illegal  
Take responsibility for your actions  
Don't mix drinks  
Never be forced into anything  
Weed can change a person  
What to do under pressure  
Effects of alcohol on your liver/brain  
Don't binge drink  
Names of drugs  
Legal limit of drinking alcohol before driving  
The law  
Cannabis makes people lazy  
Alcohol makes you aggressive  
Dangers of cannabis and alcohol  
Stick up for yourself.

### ***Clients' View on Workshop***

Overall, the information gathered from schools showed that the programmes were received well and were a success. Even the poor evaluations showed that the young person had learnt something during the workshop.

### ***Overall***

Using drama, group work, peer education, discussion and visual information such as drugs box, the young people appeared to have learnt a great deal about the effects, consequences and situations that can happen under the influence of alcohol and cannabis intoxication.

The second part of the educational sheet provided an insight into future questions to be answered. The project was seen as a tool that could be used as an accompaniment to schools' drugs education provision.

### ***Young People were requesting the Following Information: -***

- Why are drugs addictive?
- How cannabis is made?
- Skills in saying 'no'.
- How to avoid drugs.
- Rehabilitation.
- Cost.
- Laws in growing cannabis.
- How many drinks the human body digests before it dies?
- What is alcohol poisoning?
- Why do people use cannabis for healing?

- Why do drugs go to your brain?
- Injecting drugs.
- Where do drugs come from?

### **Active Neighbourhoods Sports Project**

The DAT commissioned sports development to provide a programme of activities for vulnerable young people, targeting those from the following who are: -

- 10-19 years old
- Homeless
- Looked after
- Care leavers
- Children in need
- From the pupil referral unit or excluded from education

A grant of £10,000 was awarded to the department with the broad aims of: -

- Enhance engagement and work with vulnerable young people in Halton.
- Offer activities that promote social inclusion, reduce anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.
- Enable the Drug Action Team in partnership with the Active Neighbourhoods Project, to assess the viability of further funding activities aimed at preventing or reducing substance misuse.

#### ***Activities Promoted***

Football, multi activity days, climbing wall, skiing, paintballing, go-karting, yoga/pilates, gym, swimming, archery, Reese health rope challenge, canoeing, kayaking, ramp work, badminton, tennis, squash, windsurfing, sailing and golf lessons.

A maximum of 40 young people were targeted across specific organisations (HITS, PAYP, looked after children and young people not engaged in education). A further 12 young people attended vocational college and completed training as pool lifeguards at a total cost of £1355.40.

#### ***Completed Outcomes***

- 12 young people awarded junior sports leader award.
- 52 young people engaged in new activities
- Anger management/personal behaviour issues tackled through group sessions and individual one to one work.
- All organisations continuing some activity as part of their own individual ongoing programmes.
- Increased long and short-term health benefits through reduction in substance/alcohol misuse.
- Awareness raised and education given around substance misuse.

- Personal interest rose leading to reduce anti-social behaviour, drug use, alcohol or substance misuse and smoking.
- Certificate of attendance awarded to all young people

## **Underage Sales Project**

Halton Consumer Protection Service (Trading Standards) are responsible for the enforcement of underage sales legislation. However, due to the cross over with the Drug Action Team in relation to cigarettes, alcohol, solvents and butane. Halton DAT commissioned Trading Standards £10,000 to provide education and information to the trade. This work included: -

### ***Validated Proof of Age Cards***

Aimed at all 16-18yr old children within the borough to have a proof of age card.

### ***Age Check Packs***

To provide free display publicity material for traders who supply age restricted products.

### ***Newsletters***

To devise, publish and distribute newsletters for the trade giving information and advice in relation to complying with age-related sales legislation and the associated health and anti-social behaviour resulting from the supply of restricted products.

### ***Publicity***

To target the public, warning them of the criminal offence that they can commit when buying alcohol for someone underage. As well as a mobile number display encouraging a person to report to Trading Standards anyone who is selling age-restricted products to anyone underage. Publicity was carried out through: -

- Beer mats
- Advert in Cineworld magazine
- Posters
- Adverts in the weekly news

## **Shift Project**

Halton Borough Council's Arts Development team and Arts for Health Co-ordinator have been allocated a £10,000 grant from the Drug Action Team to develop a music, dance and visual arts project for vulnerable young people between 10 and 19 years of age.

A professional arts company called Air, who has experience of working with vulnerable young people has been employed to facilitate an urban music, dance and visual arts program who will be responsible for the delivery and co-ordination of the project.

Air, Arts in Regeneration is based in Speke in Liverpool and has been active since 1995. It was established as an independent limited company and registered charity in 1999. The company offers a variety of programs that offer both structures and informal learning opportunities. These include working with young people on photographic and digital imaging software, audio and DJ equipment, video and multi media performances, visual and environmental arts. Air's staff and sessional workers are highly skilled in reaching and working productively with all types young people. The company has developed approaches which aim to identify and eliminate barriers to inclusion, in order to maximise involvement and participation opportunities.

The aims of this project are to engage vulnerable young people to take ownership of the work and therefore helping to increase motivation and self worth. To promote social inclusion, reducing anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.

A steering group was established to direct project with representatives from the Arts Development Team, DAT and Arts for Health

The Shift Project was initiated to target vulnerable children and young people from the ages of 10-19 and bring together organisations and young people from St Chads School, HITS, Halton Pupil Referral Unit and the Belvedere.

60 children and young people participated in the project, using music, film, dance and visual arts to send out messages relating to health, education and social inclusion.

A presentation evening was held at The Brindley on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004 for the young people to display their work through a series of video, plays, dances and performances.

The DAT are currently waiting for a full outcomes report from the children and young people involved. A DVD or video will be available from the Drug Action Team from the end of January 2005.