

## Woodingdean Youth Centre

### MYBus Case Study



#### **What was the issue?**

The issue was lack of accessible youth services for young people in the Deans area of Brighton & Hove. Specifically our research discovered that the needs of many young people were not being effectively met because there are no youth clubs / centres in Saltdean, Ovingdean or Rottingdean and Woodingdean Youth Centre is situated on the fringe of Woodingdean (not easily accessible to all young people). The research with young people uncovered that they wanted a service that could work on the streets so that Information, advice and guidance and positive activities were easy to access and could go out to them.

#### **Who did you engage with?**

Primarily we engaged with young people to develop a 'youth-led' project which was underpinned by our organisational values with a specific focus on involving young people in the development of services aimed at them. We engaged with Local Action Teams, Residents Associations, Parish Council, other community groups and local charitable giving organisations such as Rottingdean & Saltdean Lions and PARC (Play Area In Rottingdean Committee), our local Councillors and local businesses to develop and establish the project. Much of the engagement was focused on meeting community needs and fundraising for the project. We also worked with Brighton & Hove City Council Youth & Connexions Service and Voluntary Sector Funding Unit who have been very supportive of our efforts to develop services for young people.

#### **What did you do?**

As a direct response to the type of development in services that young people have told us they wanted to see we raised funds to purchase a Mobile Home and customised it. With support from a small contingency grant of £5,000 from Brighton & Hove City Council and a £5,000 Award from the Co-operative we piloted the project over a 6 month period between November 2008 and April 2009. We created a wide spectrum of attractive new opportunities for young people to become involved in shaping/ delivering the services they require, created new opportunities for other local organisations/ agencies to reach young people and to involve them in the planning/delivery of their work, helped address at a local level some of the aims of policies such as 'Aiming High for Young People'- A 10 year strategy for positive activities and Children and 'Young Peoples Plans 2006- 2009' and PSA 14 Delivery Agreement targets; increase the number of children and young people on the path to success.

#### **What was the impact?**

It was felt that the pilot project was a huge success delivering 54 street based youth sessions and 403 contacts with young people and the impact was:

1. Youth Workers have built positive relationships with young people and increased their involvement in the regeneration of Bexhill Park by setting up a stakeholders group where they are taking a lead role.
2. The C Card scheme has reached out to more young people who have had swift and easy access to condoms and sexual health advice on the MYBus.
3. The Youth Workers have built a very positive relationship with our local PCSO Theresa Hammond in Woodingdean who has visited the project on her rounds.
4. The Youth Workers have evaluated what locations are more suited for the delivery of MYBus sessions and mapped out where local need is.
5. The Youth Workers through the MYBus project have supported local residents in Ovingdean to deal with ASB in the village relating to young people using the hay barn. Young people no longer use this location and have been diverted away from risk taking and unsafe behaviour.

6. Community relations have been strengthened between young people and local residents through the support of the project by youth workers advocating on their behalf and resolving conflicts and tensions.
7. Young people have been consistently challenged by Youth Workers regarding risk taking and negative behaviour with an outcome of reduced reports of ASB incidents and the strengthening of relationships with our Neighbourhood Policing Team.

### **What barriers, challenges or points of learning did you identify from the process?**

In the pilot phase of the project Youth Workers have carried out reconnaissance work to survey where young people hang out in order to develop a service that meets their direct needs. In the original appeal for funding we said we would deliver 12 MYBus sessions a month which has been achieved and exceeded however locations and times of sessions have been adjusted to respond to the requests of young people and to fit in with how they choose to spend their leisure time. As an example we have delivered sessions at Woodingdean Central Park between the hours of 3 and 6 pm as opposed to 6.30 pm and 8.30 pm because these have been the times when young people have hung out at this location. By being flexible and responsive to the needs of young people the project has had some success in engaging hard to reach and disaffected young people that otherwise the Youth Workers would not have met. The season and weather conditions have also had a bearing on service delivery which we have also had to account for. During the winter months we have less hours of daylight to work in and some locations have insufficient lighting for example Rottingdean Recreation Ground has no lighting during the evenings and this deters young people from gathering here at these times. To address this issue sessions have been delivered at the earlier times of 3 to 6 pm when more young people are out and about after school. During the pilot phase of the project there has been much learning for the organisation about the impact of environmental factors such as weather and accessibility of locations, managing risk and finding out about local issues and the needs of young people. Finally the main challenge was to find a way of financially sustaining the project longer term so during the pilot phase we worked on a bid to the Big Lottery Young People's Fund 2. This involved a tremendous amount of work with young people and the staff team however the hard work paid off as in August 2009 it was announced we had been successful in our application and were awarded £155,000 to fund the MYBus project for 3 years. The lottery funding is providing young people with new opportunities to have meaningful involvement in the development, design and review of services aimed at them and a unique feature of the project is that it is entirely youth led. As an example young people recruited the staff to run the project and helped design elements of the current delivery programme.

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