



KICK ASH

“Kick Ash gave me some really good advice that helped me to stop smoking” (Chatback participant).

NHS Dudley has supported a pioneering approach to working with young people to reduce smoking in the region. Kick Ash was set up to provide young people with the opportunity to apply for money to develop their own creative projects which contribute towards the creation of Smokefree environments in the Dudley Borough. Dudley Kick Ash is a partnership between Dudley Stop Smoking Service, Dudley Youth Service, Praxis (arts & health network) and young people from Dudley. Praxis is managed by Creative Health and the projects were funded in partnership with Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts awards. The project is aimed at young people or organisations working with young people aged 11-19 (11-25 if they have a disability) who live in or operate within the Dudley Borough.



Young People As Project Partners

Kick Ash does not treat young people as passive receivers of public health messages; rather they are the leaders and facilitators in this innovative creative project. Working in partnership with Dudley Youth Service and NHS Dudley's teenage smoking advisor, this gives young people the power and control to design creative interventions which they feel could change attitudes and behaviour towards smoking. Young people in Dudley are invited to apply for a grant (up to £2000) and support to develop projects for other young people to reduce the impact of smoking on young people in the region. In addition, a condition of grant approval is to ensure information about each project is shared in order to promote this way of delivering public health campaigns.

The project team that initiated the project included Hayley Jennings (Dudley Stop Smoking Service), Kate Gant (Praxis arts and health network), Siobhan Lloyd (Senior Officer for Youth Empowerment Dudley Youth Service), Born Communication, Janet Hetherington (evaluator), and Ruth Olding (NHS Dudley's Tobacco Control Programme Manager).

Through advertising in schools, youth and community groups; young people were invited to set up projects. NHS Dudley used mapping analysis and youth survey results to identify areas, which they felt were most in need of this project based upon high levels of people who smoke.

A Youth Panel was appointed and has been involved in all decisions regarding how grants were promoted and allocated. Two members of the youth panel conducted interviews with applicants to determine who was awarded a grant. Groups receiving grants were able to decide how to best use this resource; the choices made included using photography and video as a tool for evaluation and incorporating creative techniques such as graffiti and sound recordings and using these to document the project.



The youth panel created the infrastructure for the project and has been involved in the monitoring and development of the project as it has evolved.

Central to this approach, was a belief by adults involved in facilitating the project that the young people had first hand experience of their peer's preferences and experiences in the region, and were familiar with the local context in which the project would operate.

The project also included a project group of young people who worked creatively with design agency Born Communications who provided digital resources, staff and alternative creative approaches to facilitation and planning. Born Communications provided input into all of the Kick Ash grant funded projects.



The Grants

The programme has produced a range of work including films about smoking and residentials designed to introduce young people to alternative activities. The grants were awarded in 2 stages, and this allowed the project team time to review the grant allocation process as well as ensure projects took place at times convenient to the groups. On receipt of the application, groups were invited to meet with the project team and discuss their application. Once they were offered the grant, each group attended a briefing event where they had the opportunity to meet other groups and learn more about how to work with the project team and develop their evaluation.



Getting Started

It took time to generate interest. This may have been due to a combination of factors including the newness of the venture and the lack of support that some young people had to organise themselves to take the step of applying for a grant. The project was launched during a period where young people's organisations were facing uncertainty about their future and therefore there were limited resources to support young people. Once these issues had been identified, the youth panel spoke with interested groups. They felt it was important to include both formal and informal education providers, and appreciated that time and staff commitments may impact the levels of engagement from young people.



The Projects

Successful groups and a brief description of their project are:

- Kick it Residential, Amblecote Christian Centre.

A residential and workshops to introduce young people to alternative activities and experiences

- Adventure Circle, Dudley MBC, The Source Youth Centre

A newsletter written by young people in care, with a focus on health living and reducing smoking.

- Stub it Out, Dudley MBC, Valley Road Youth Centre

A music production project, where young people produced and recorded original music.

- Fag Ashes, Dudley MBC, Valley Road Youth Centre

A physical activity programme including a range of activities chosen by the young people.

- Kick Ash DOT day, The High Arcal School

A day for Year 7 students full of activities and opportunities, including radio production with Signal FM, graffiti and art, to encourage dialogue and debate about reducing smoking amongst young people.

Participants feedback included;

“You can still have fun whilst making people aware of the dangers of smoking.”

“I have learned that smoking ruins your life and rots your heart and lungs.”

“Today was really good as it gave us a chance to experience what smoking is and how harmful it is.”

“I enjoyed this lesson because we learned about smoking in a fun way.”



- YP4S - Cigbuster!, Valley Rd Youth Centre,

A peer led workshop which explored the dangers of smoking.

- Through Glass Darkly – Towards Clear Breath, Glasshouse College,

A glass making project which creates a pair of glass lungs.

- Diary of a Quitter, Ridgewood School

The project involved students in the production of a dramatised video diary, with Hayley Pepler from On yer Radio, about 3 teenagers who for various reasons have decided to quit smoking.

- Snubz - Smoke or No Smoke, Hillcrest school

A project where young people produced and filmed their version of the TV game show 'Deal or No Deal' which they called 'Smoke or No Smoke', with video artist Anthony Davis.

- National Youth Theatre – Production Smoke, Dudley Youth Offending Service

The project created a piece of drama to engage the audience in thought provoking/challenging scenes around peer pressure to perform to youth groups and youth centres.

- Chatback

A film involving looked after children exploring the pressure young people face regarding smoking.

Participant's feedback included;

“In our workshops we did lots of things and we thought about ways to get the not smoking message into our film”

“I stopped smoking because it can make you really ill and it makes you get out of breath when you do exercise”

“Thanks to chatback I've quit”



Participatory Evaluation

Using an evaluation toolkit, projects were invited to choose participatory evaluation processes, which they felt were easy to incorporate into the context of the project. This enabled the steering group to work as co-researchers with the young people to ascertain what difference the project, made. The identified outcomes focused upon 4 key areas:

1. Practice- reducing smoking and smoke related activities
2. Personal perception of smoking
3. Changes in the local space and environment/ delivery of service
4. Improvements in personal belief and confidence



The Findings

The preliminary findings have revealed that people feel the project has had a significant impact on attitudes and behaviour of young people in relation to smoking. Most projects have reported a reduction in smoking amongst young people, but in particular participants have demonstrated a new awareness with regard to the dangers of smoking. Some core learning has been in regards to why and how this approach works. Evidence is suggesting that ensuring the project is young person led has meant that young people take their involvement more seriously- as they realise they are accountable for the project outcomes. By meeting health professionals, the project group and other grant beneficiaries have a greater understanding regarding the human and monetary investment in the project, and therefore become more committed to delivering the project objectives. In addition, the young person's expertise in the lifestyles of their peers, local culture and local issues has enabled them to tailor- make projects to suit the group's needs. This has included making adaptations such as choosing the appropriate venue, incentives for participating, and quality of experience, which has helped ensure projects are relevant and accessible for the local youth population.

The work and findings are being celebrated at an event in January where a video about the project made by the project team will be shown. There is also an online platform at www.dudleykickash.com, where you can find documentation and film about the different projects. The project group, which has consisted of 9 young people, has gained a range of filming and editing skills whilst gathering this information about the project.



Future Developments

Following the success of its initial phase, NHS Dudley has committed to continue to deliver Kick Ash for the next one and a half years. Having successfully launched two rounds of the grant, the project group has been able to see what impact it can have on young people. The project team now wants to concentrate on exploring how they can encourage more young people to participate. The steering group also wants to develop a wider, more inspirational menu from which young people can choose from a broader range of creative interventions, and explore what additional resources are required for the expansion of this service.

By embracing the knowledge, enthusiasm and energy of young people, and by providing opportunities for high quality creative interventions, NHS Dudley has discovered a useful approach to tackling issues associated with smoking and young people.

Further information about the individual projects can be found at www.dudleykickash.com