

BARCA

Over the last 12 months BARCA-Leeds young persons harm reduction team have continued to deliver existing work as well as branching out a little into different areas.

We deliver drugs education in all of the West Leeds high schools and also some of the primary schools, youth inclusion projects and pupil referral units. To compliment the general drugs awareness we offer the young people we have started taking volunteer ex-users to talk to groups about their experiences and answer questions raised.

A number of pupils at YIP achieved accreditation in OCN drugs level 1 and further pupils are working towards that now at the same project. A member of the team has set up a peer education group in lunchtimes at a local school - members of that group are also working towards the accreditation.

2 baby reality projects have now been delivered - 1 jointworked with the connexions team at BARCA and the other with a 'health ed' worker. The most recent group are due to go on a residential in February with the simulator dolls!! Girls from both groups achieved accreditation in baby and infant 1st aid.

We received funding from sports relief so were able to provide a whole array of diversionary activities for a wide range of young people over the summer holidays and again at half term - this will now be an ongoing thing for half terms and holidays. So far there has been self defence, street dance, canoeing, kayaking, snowboarding, scuba diving, paintballing and much more. Young people achieved accreditation in kayaking and canoeing over the course of 2 days at the end of the summer.

We played an integral part in delivering training to teachers and learning mentors from across the city at an event at the carriageworks in town.

Over the course of the next 12 months we will continue to deliver well established programmes of work and endeavour to set up more peer education groups like the one being piloted now. We hope to be able to offer more young people the chance to gain accreditation in drugs awareness. We are actively seeking new volunteers to join our team to enable us to increase the amount of work we can take on both in and out of schools.

Funding is always an issue for the team - from the point of view of job security and maintaining the service itself. We are a small team that equate to 2 full time workers, one of which holds a management position. Certain work, for instance focus days at schools require at least 2 workers for a full day - the focus days can often clash with other groups we are running, more staff would enable us to 'cover all bases'. Accreditation is not cheap - we would like to be able to offer to pay for more young people to gain certificates but it is not possible.

The increasing amount of figures and details required from us is becoming a handicap to some of the work we do - the amount of information being asked for from different people is meaning reduced contact time with young people. Drop in monitoring now requires the post code, age and ethnicity of each young person - during a 45minute session at one of the schools there can be over 100 young people coming in and out - to collect that data would need a worker at the session specifically for the purpose of collecting it while the other worker actually got on with the aim of the session.