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SafeTaySiders Practice Exemplar

12/05/2021

Introduction

PC Scott Menmuir has worked for eight years with Prevention in Police Scotland and covers the whole of Tayside. Watch Commander Campbell Sands is the Local Authority Liaison Office for Perth and Kinross Council. Temporary Watch Commander Gary Woods is the Local Authority Liaison for Angus Council. On Tuesday 11th May they explained what the programme SafeTaySiders is about.

Situation

Dundee is a large city, which had a problem with youth related disorder and anti-social behaviour in the northeast of the city. In 1991 a programme was set up by the police for P7 pupils, who were about to go into secondary education to teach them what could happen in various situations such as Personal, Road, Water and Home Safety, and how to avoid them."

Action

Originally a programme for schools in the North West of Dundee was held at Baluniefield Police Station. The feedback from this first session allowed the organisers to judge if it was a success or not. As the programme was deemed to be successful in Dundee it now has a wider reach covering the whole of the Tayside area. The programme runs for three weeks due to the large number of primary schools in the Tayside area. Each Local Authority area has different needs, that identified what sort of input and the partner

agency invited onto the delivery side of the initiative. For example, if there had been damage to buses in Dundee, then Dundee would get the bus company to come along and deliver information. The anti-social side may be picked up on by Community wardens etc.

The pupils meet with the partner agencies, such as Scottish Fire and Rescue, SEPA, Dundee City Council, Perth and Kinross Council and Angus Council.

Situations are created to allow for a smooth transition between P7 to S1. Each of the agencies, who are experts in their subject, have a ten-minute slot in which they discuss areas and explore issues to help steer the pupils in the right direction and away from crime and unintentional harm.

The area that is covered by the programme is both urban and rural with different safety topics being selected for each area. For the rural areas, issues such as electrical safety, farm safety, pesticide safety and agricultural vehicle safety are covered.

At the beginning of each session the students complete a brief questionnaire where their knowledge baseline is established. Following this, the different agencies deliver their presentations and workshops. For example, Fire and Rescue will address home safety issues using a room setup where hazards such as an overloaded socket, hair straighteners sitting on a bed and a mobile phone charger still plugged in but with no phone are laid out across the room. Once the issues have been identified by the students they will be discussed as to why they are unsafe and how to make them safer. Through the workshops students walk away with a better understanding of the risks and how to stay safe in the home.

Once the sessions are complete, students then complete a questionnaire to establish if their knowledge has improved as a result of the educational activities. Students from the school that demonstrates the biggest improvement are given tickets for the cinema.

Although the sessions have been held face to face since 1991, in 2020 they had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is anticipated in September 2021 they will resume digitally. The opportunity to present the programme digitally will allow for more partners. Watch Commander Woods delivered the sessions as a firefighter and is now planning the virtual sessions. The aim is to have 14 videos along with information presented in a PowerPoint and to have six or seven questions per topic for evaluation of each module. There will be evaluation questions at the end of the session.

Outcome

The representatives from the services that deliver the workshops will no longer have to take time away from work for extended periods of time to deliver their presentations in schools. The plan to deliver the workshops digitally enabled trainers to record their workshops in one go and potentially opens up more time to pursue other priorities. However, it is still important that face to face sessions continue if appropriate as it is unknown if engaging digitally has the same impact of learning in a real life group setting

Reflection

A purpose build digital programme will hopefully enable the better delivery of the SafeTaySiders educational programme. There will be less logistics to contend with and also security was sometimes an issue when the programme was delivered at the police station. The possibilities of using technology are endless, including potential for accessible for Virtual Reality headsets that provide an even more immersive experience.

The face-to-face interaction will be missed, but with technology the programme will be less expensive to run and hopefully the money that is saved will be able to be used for other community projects.

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