



Practice Note 25

New Horizons Programme

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Project Background and Aims

The New Horizons Programme was launched by Inverclyde Council In October 2008. This is a diversionary and disciplinary programme for young people aged 14-17 with a history of low level offending and/or anti-social behaviour. The aim of the programme is to re-educate the young people by explaining the full impact of anti-social behaviour and its consequences. New Horizons was designed as a response to concerns over the level of youth disorder in Inverclyde from both residents and practitioners.

Various surveys carried out with Inverclyde residents had indicated antisocial behaviour was a key issue. For example, 54% of members of Inverclyde's Citizens' Panel stated that antisocial behaviour was an issue in their neighbourhood in a survey conducted in June 2008. Moreover, perceived youth disorder was one of the main reasons for calls to the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Helpline.

The programme also aims to assist young people to develop citizenship skills and to aid their personal development. The young people take part in workshops, and site visits. For example, the programme includes visits to the local prison where discussion sessions take place with prisoners and prison staff. Workshops are facilitated by the Procurator Fiscal, Greenock Sheriff Court and Strathclyde Police, and the course also includes input from recovering drug users and knife crime victims, including family members.

Through the programme young people find out about employment and further education opportunities and they participate in activities relating to sport, music and

health. The programme lasts two weeks and is held 4 times a year to enable as many young people as possible to take part.

Outcomes

National	4: 'Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens', 8: 'We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk', and 9: 'We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger',
Local	Corporate Plan: Safe, Sustainable Communities and Educated, Informed, Responsible Citizens. Community Plan: Alcohol Misuse and Responsible Active Citizens. SOA: All our young people have the best start in life and are provided with the supportive networks to ensure they achieve to their full potential.

Resources

Funding:	Core funding.
Partners:	Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Scottish Prison Service, The British Army, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Procurator Fiscal, James Watt College, the Senior Sheriff, Morton Football Club, Inverclyde Leisure, the Scottish Football Association and Renfrewshire Council.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The New Horizons Programme is monitored through a participant survey which is disseminated at the end of the course. This allows the workshop deliverers to ensure that the course content is targeted sufficiently well to encourage the young people to attend, engage their interest, whilst still maintaining an appropriate degree of challenge to satisfy the diversionary purposes of the programme.

Each individual is tracked for two years after completing the programme and a report is submitted annually. The first contact is made three months after the completion of the course and continues quarterly thereafter.

Activities

Referrals are accepted from the Antisocial Investigations Team (ASIST), Community Police, Street Mediators, Community Wardens, Education and the Juvenile Intervention Group (JIG).

A selection committee has been established to screen possible candidates to assess their suitability for the programme. All participants complete a parental consent form and a home visit is made to parents or guardians prior to the start of the programme, to advise them of the contents and the desired outcome. Table 1 below lists the workshops and activities that the young people take part in during the two week programme.

Table 1: New Horizons' Two Week Programme

<p>British Transport Police – the young people attend a presentation by the British Transport Police which focuses on railway safety, trespassing and vandalism.</p>	<p>Procurator Fiscal – This session is taken by the District Procurator Fiscal for Inverclyde. It covers the prosecution of crime in Scotland and the work of the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service.</p>
<p>Greenock Sheriff Court – highlighted the implications of a life of crime and antisocial behaviour. The session is taken by the local Senior Sheriff.</p>	<p>Brick Laying – James Watt College – practical aspects of building. The young people take on a project supervised by qualified instructors.</p>
<p>Alcohol Workshop – Young people develop an understanding of the effects of alcohol on all aspects of life.</p>	<p>Army Careers – Session taken by professional soldiers giving insight to military life.</p>
<p>Car Mechanics – Practical and theoretical course on vehicle mechanics.</p>	<p>Music Workshop – The opportunity to broaden musical interests and abilities.</p>
<p>Anti Social Investigation Team – discussed the implications and extended consequences of being involved in antisocial behaviour, including ABCs, ASBOs, imprisonment, evictions etc.</p>	<p>Joinery Workshop James Watt College – participants gain practical and theoretical skills and experience of working with wood and joinery equipment.</p>
<p>SFA Coaching Session – Football development officer delivers coach techniques.</p>	<p>Army Day Out – compliments earlier session on military life.</p>
<p>Visit to Greenock Prison – Meet staff and prisoners in extended discussions.</p>	<p>Computer Workshop – developing computer skills and understanding.</p>
<p>Gang Workshop with Strathclyde Police – all aspects of gang culture.</p>	<p>Paisley Fire Station – extended fire safety lecture including search & rescue exercise.</p>
<p>Drugs – the young people heard from a former footballer whose life was shattered by taking drugs and from local drugs workers.</p>	<p>Tobacco / Cannabis – Facilitated by the NHS and focused on the dangers of smoking and drugs.</p>
<p>Vandalism Workshop with Strathclyde Police</p>	<p>Fly Fishing at Loch Tom – for relaxation and sport.</p>
<p>Knife Crime – the young people interact with a victim of knife crime.</p>	<p>Go – Karting – as a diversionary activity and reward for effective participation.</p>
<p>Strathclyde Fire and Rescue – this workshop covered road traffic collisions, Fire safety and safety in the home.</p>	<p>Visit to Renfrewshire Wardens - the young people went out with the wardens to see first hand the impact that anti-social behaviour can have in the community beyond their own.</p>

As table 1 indicates, the programme is a disciplinary course and uses hard-hitting tactics to highlight to participants the consequences of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Young people who go through the programme are monitored thereafter for two years and ongoing support is provided for those who require it. This enables young people to be given opportunities to re-engage with services that will enhance their initial experience. Participants are also provided with Leisure Passes from the local Leisure Trust which is promoted post-programme for use in all the local leisure centres.

Impact

Over the first four programmes 48 young people have participated in New Horizons, with only three dropping out or being asked to leave. This is a success rate of over 93% in terms of completion, which is very good given the complex nature of the barriers and difficulties faced by these young people. A significant number of the young people referred to the course were disengaging from formal education and were likely to have issues with consistent attendance on any programme.

Schools report that they see a significant improvement in the young people when they return after New Horizons. Also, a number of other participants have decided to join the Army as a result of involvement in the course or taken the opportunity to participate in additional outward bound training offered by the Army after the course. Other participants have gone on to do night classes at the local college after finding courses of interest to them during visits; for example, Car Maintenance.

Participants are regularly invited to take part in a range of activities and the majority of them take up these offers. This is due to the rapport and relationship built up with them during the New Horizons Programme.

Many of the activities undertaken on the programme were evaluated as positive by the young people as they helped them to develop their interpersonal skills and bond together as a group. For example, the Procurator Fiscal's workshop involved a task where the young people had to guess the outcome of scenarios based on real court cases. This showed the consequences of criminal involvement and had a considerable impact. Young people also stated that they learned a lot from the discussion with a recovering drug user, particularly about the impact of behaviour on families and friends.

In 2008/09 there was a very significant drop in the number of children from Inverclyde who were referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter because they had committed an offence. 588 referrals were made in 2007/08 and 397 in 2008/09. This represents a decline of -32.5%; double the Scotland figure of -16.3%. While this cannot be directly attributed to the New Horizons Programme, it does suggest that the range of measures being taken in Inverclyde to reduce the number of young people committing offences is having a significant impact, and the New Horizons

Programme is an important part of this framework. This positive impact is further suggested by 85% of participants continuing to engage with services after completing the programme.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

The programme has been financed through the Service's Core Budget. The rationale for this is that the entire New Horizons programme can be funded for one year for the same level of funding to "process" one young person through the system for a serious assault. Therefore, preventing one serious assault enables the programme to effectively pay for itself. Taking this approach maximises the sustainability of the programme, which is therefore not reliant on short-term, challenge funding for its continuation.

Head Teachers have been vital to the establishment of the programme by identifying young people who would be suitable for the programme and releasing them from school to attend for a two week intensive period.

A wide range of partners contribute to the programme, for example, Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Scottish Prison Service, The British Army, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Procurator Fiscal, James Watt College, the Senior Sheriff, Morton Football Club, Inverclyde Leisure and other local authorities. The good partnership working will help to sustain the continuation of the programme.

The programme is delivered in a number of "real venues" across Inverclyde, places where young people might continue to attend once the programme has ended, such as community centres where they can link to other services and further support.

New Horizons covers areas of personal and social development to help young people find alternatives to a life of crime and antisocial behaviour.

The New Horizons Programme received a Silver Award in Excellence from CoSLA in 2010. Also, the Diversionary Officer who runs the programme received Scotland's Outstanding Public Service Worker of the Year in the 2010 Herald Excellence Awards and the Pride of Inverclyde award the same year.

Summary

The New Horizons Programme is a diversionary and disciplinary programme in Inverclyde, delivered for young people aged 14-17 with a history of low level offending and/or anti-social behaviour. The aim of the programme is to re-educate the young people by explaining the full impact of anti-social behaviour and its consequences. A wide range of partners contribute to the programme, for example, Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Scottish Prison Service, the British Army, Morton Football Club and Inverclyde Leisure.

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