



## Practice Note 9

**Project Name: South Lanarkshire Active Schools Pilot Project**

**Contact Name:** Mark Henderson

**Address:** Network Rail, Buchanan

**Position Held:** Community Safety Manager (Scotland)  
House, 58 Port Dundas House, Glasgow, G4 0LQ

**Telephone:** 0141 555 4104

**Email:** [mark.henderson2@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:mark.henderson2@networkrail.co.uk)

**WebsiteURL:**

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### Project Background and Aims

There are a range of railway crimes that cost the industry an estimated £260million per annum. Many of these are perpetrated by young people, including placing objects on the railway line, vandalism, trespassing, antisocial behaviour such as throwing missiles at trains) and misuse of level crossings. Thus, Network Rail (which owns, operates and maintains the UK's rail infrastructure) has a dedicated Community Safety Team to work in partnership with other organisations to address railway crime in Scotland, England and Wales. Their multi-strand community safety programme includes:

- Community Payback Scheme,
- Don't Run the Risk campaign,
- No Messin' campaign,
- Educational projects,
- Public arts projects,
- Restorative Justice Programme,
- Scholarship Scheme/ Sponsorships,
- Dynamic Youth/ Youth Challenge Award delivered in collaboration with Youth Scotland as part of the Community Safety Project,
- Tailored workshops,
- Bespoke interventions, and
- Providing resources and support.

Network Rail currently works in partnership with SportScotland in South Lanarkshire to deliver an educational project with diversionary activities. This intervention integrates Network Rail's 'No Messin'' campaign and SportScotland's Active Schools initiative.

The **Active Schools** initiative is a nationwide network of project managers based within primary and high schools which aims to provide more physical activity opportunities for young people. Active Schools is funded by Sport Scotland and managed locally by local authority. The initiative looks to create a sustainable physical activity pathway by increasing after-school sports clubs, linking with local community sports clubs and providing training opportunities for those delivering after school sports clubs. Every school in Scotland is overseen by an Active Schools Coordinator and more information can be gained by visiting the SportScotland website at <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/>.

**No Messin'** is an award-winning campaign focussed on railway safety which aims to draw young people away from antisocial behaviour to local clubs and diversionary activities. Further information is available at <http://www.no-messin.com>.

The South Lanarkshire intervention thus aims to provide physical activity opportunities and convey rail safety messages to pupils in select schools. The pilot project was implemented in four high schools and 28 primary schools, located within three of Network Rail's top ten trespass and vandalism areas<sup>1</sup> - the train stations and surrounding areas of Newton, Blantyre and Hamilton.

### Resources

Funding: The pilot project was match funded by Sports Match (SportScotland) and Network Rail. Staff costs are covered by core funding.

Partners: SportScotland, Network Rail, South Lanarkshire Council.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

An evaluation report of the pilot project is available from the Community Safety Manager for Scotland at Network Rail. Monitoring data is collected weekly on attendance and feedback is gained through feedback with participating pupils. Thus, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data is recorded.

### Activities

Two Active Schools Coordinators were responsible for the day-to day running of the project in Calderside Academy, Cathkin High School, Stonelaw High School and Trinity High School. Work in the 28 affiliated primary schools in the area is integrated through a further five coordinators.

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on reported incidents hotspots.

Although the intervention was match funded, the educational theme of the project focused exclusively on reducing railway crime and incidents in the local area. Every week, therefore, school pupils had to learn one railway safety information point such as:

- The overhead lines never switch off and electricity can jump,
- The stopping distance of a train,
- The weight of a train,
- The number of deaths on the railway line in the UK,
- The importance of not “crossing the line”,
- Putting into perspective the dangers of taking a short cut across a railway line, and
- The legal penalty for trespassing on the railway lines in the local area.

Sports activities of the project are run through an after-school club at each high school one day per week from 3:30 – 5:00 pm under the No Messin’ branding. This is provided during term-time, over 21 weeks of the year. The project also ran diversionary activities through the Easter and summer breaks as Network Rail had identified these as key times for increased railway crimes and incidents.

All four high schools have also hosted their feeder primary schools for physical activity days. Each high school brought together on average 40 pupils from local primary schools over a period of 12 weeks where pupils took part in physical activity alongside learning about railway safety.

The rationale for involving primary schools in the project was based on evidence suggesting the success of early interventions in deterring antisocial behaviour. Moreover, this established links with primary schools for the newly developed “Rail Safety Reps” programme, due to be launched in October 2010 in a number of targeted locations throughout the UK.

To compliment the promotional activities of the project and further enhance positive word of mouth amongst pupils, Network Rail brought in football freestyler Colin Nell to the schools and provided a trip to meet Amir Kahn, the World Boxing Association junior welterweight world champion, at his gym in Bolton. Moreover, the Active Schools project developed a promotional DVD with the participation of young people, which has been shown on the South Lanarkshire TV website. South Lanarkshire Council’s Media/Communications Team also produced a 5 minute DVD called “A Train Driver’s Story”, which highlights the feelings/ emotions experienced by a train driver, whilst further emphasising the dangers of misusing the railway infrastructure.

## Impact

The evaluation report indicates that the pilot project has successfully engaged with pupils at all four high schools. The project ran for 21 weeks between October 2009 and June 2010 with an average weekly attendance of 178 pupils. The maximum

attendance for this time period was 192 pupils, although this dropped to a minimum of 147 halfway through the block. This fall in numbers was due to social dance being taught in Physical Education (PE) classes in the run up to the Festive Break, with young people subsequently not bringing PE kit to the after-school club. The table below shows the first cohort's activities and attendance.

### South Lanarkshire Active Schools Pilot Project Activities and Attendance

High School	Activities	Attendance
Calderside	Street Dance, Dodgeball, Basketball	42 per week
Stonelaw	Street dance, Badminton, Karate	41 average per week
Cathkin	Street Dance, Badminton, Karate	43 average per week
Trinity	Trampolining, Street Dance, Basketball	52 average per week

The activities were selected based on the experience consultation with both staff and pupils within the participating schools. The consultation process was led by the Active Schools Coordinators, using focus groups/survey with pupils and focus groups with staff. Thus, the activities chosen were demand-led. Street Dance, for instance, was run specifically to engage with female pupils. The activities programme has been adapted, based on consultation with participating pupils. Trampolining and basketball, for example, have been major attractions and 5-a-side football has been added to the programme.

In addition to the core programme of sports activities, forty pupils went on the trip to meet Amir Khan in Bolton, allowing young people to find out more about boxing as well as meeting a positive role model. This was funded by Network Rail's No Messin' campaign.

### Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

A core feature of the intervention has been meaningful consultation with both school staff and pupils. This was paramount in facilitating a sense of ownership of the project amongst young people and the resulting programme of activities being demand-led to ensure consistently high attendances.

The intervention has benefitted from positive word of mouth generated by peripheral events delivered by the partnership team. For example, bringing a football freestyler into the high schools at the outset increased interest in the programme, as he performed to thousands of young people.

The partnership team have used experience to stretch funds such as utilising free lets in local facilities, use of coordinators to deliver Easter and summer activities, use of volunteers within the programme as opposed to paid coaches, the negotiation with local bus companies who will give schools heavily discounted rates, providing a payment structure for coaches which is realistic and sustainable.

The success of the pilot project has resulted in the intervention being rolled out throughout all primary and secondary schools in South Lanarkshire for an additional two years, funded by Network Rail. This will mean the involvement of 120 primary schools and 19 high schools.

It is also hoped by SportScotland and Network Rail that the ongoing success of South Lanarkshire Active Schools will ultimately lead to the mainstreaming of the project's key messages of railway safety and sports participation across all local authorities in Scotland.

### Summary

This intervention brings together Network Rail's **No Messin'** campaign and SportScotland's **Active Schools** programme. Following a successful pilot project which engaged with staff and pupils in four local high schools and 28 local primary schools, the intervention is now aimed at increasing sports participation and rail safety awareness amongst school pupils attending all primary and secondary schools in South Lanarkshire.

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**Address:** Office 6/7 Inglewood House, Inglewood, Alloa, FK10 2HU  
**Tel No:** 01259 212079  
**Fax No:** 01257 220333  
**E-mail:** [info@scsn.org.uk](mailto:info@scsn.org.uk)  
**Website:** <http://www.communitysafetyscotland.org/>