

Street Talk⁹

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NEWS

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Street Talk and Capacity Building

Over the coming months Mentor and Addaction will be working with local Street Talk organisations to continue to strengthen their skills, competencies and abilities to deliver brief interventions to young people. It is already becoming clear that these interventions are benefiting the young people in touch with the project and we are all committed to making sure we talk to as many young people as possible over the next few months.

Beyond the delivery of brief interventions to vulnerable young people, one of the key outcomes for the project is to help develop the capacity of the local organisations involved; helping them fulfil their mission and goals and thrive as organisations.

Using accredited tools we will work together to develop the volunteers and work force, implement communication strategies, and work on fundraising and income.

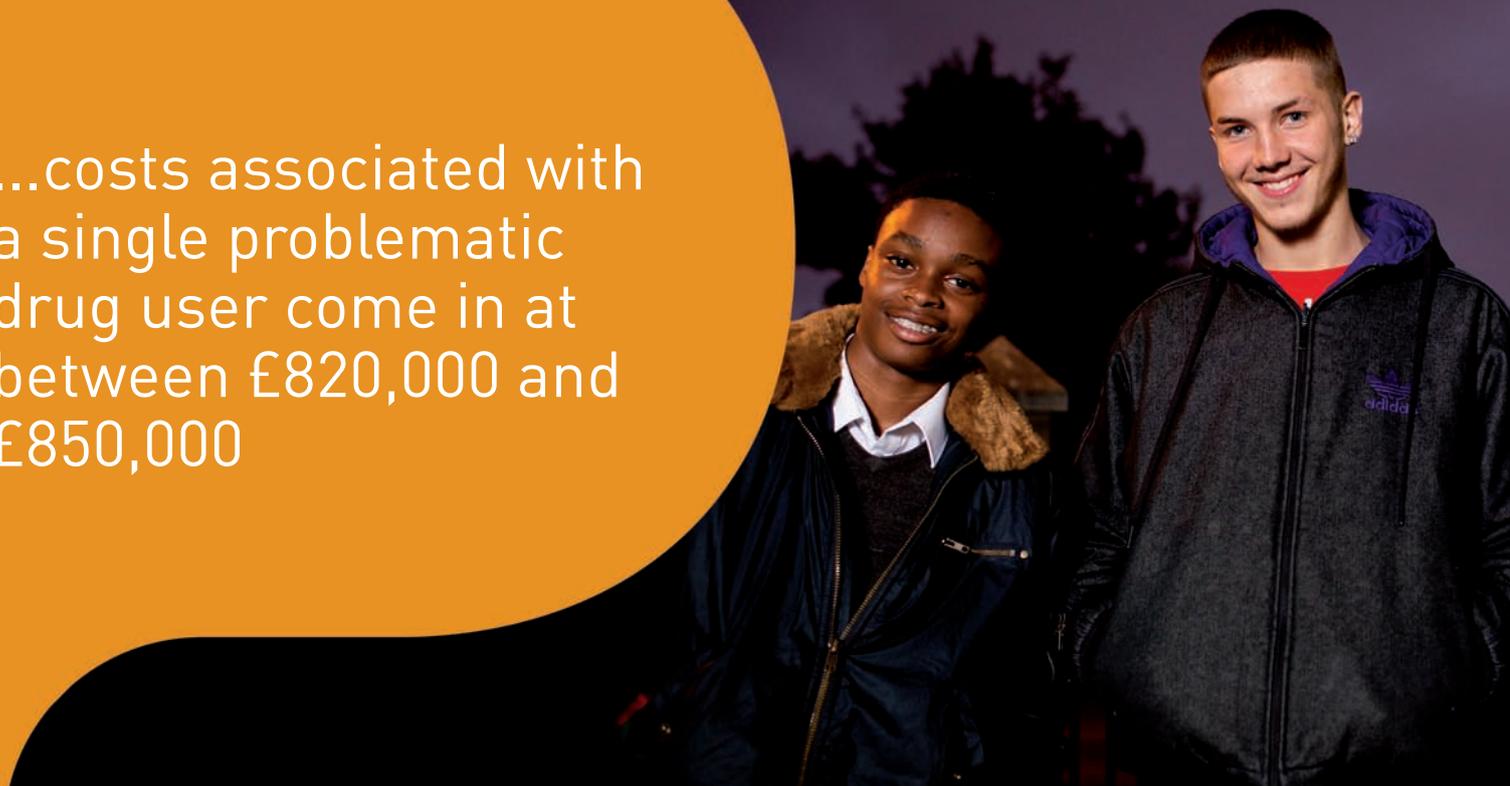
The Street Talk team looks forward to supporting local organisations in further developing their capacity.



transforming the lives of young people affected by drugs and alcohol



...costs associated with a single problematic drug user come in at between £820,000 and £850,000



Cornwall

We took a trip to meet the people involved in our projects in Cornwall. An eclectic mix of groups from across the county took time to talk to us about their day to day work and how they felt Street Talk will help the young people they work with.

They are keen to emphasise that they don't have different problems to the rest of the county when it comes to drugs and alcohol. But they do suffer hidden deprivation which can be masked by the area's rural nature and reputation as a tourist destination.

Sam Fitzpatrick from Treyla told us that they will be using a two pronged approach to deliver Street Talk programme with her people. The plan is to use the brief intervention to help support their day to day work which is based around informal working with young people. They also plan on hosting events to help get bigger groups of young people come together at a sports day event.

Alan Millner from White Gold says that one of the great bonuses about this project is the capacity building and staff development. He particularly values the ability to pay staff to go on training, and is keen to carry on using the skills they acquired after Street Talk wraps up.

The workers also loved the fact that the project recognises the importance of getting to harder to reach young people and is designed to make sure that we don't miss these young people, who then get the help they need.



The Benefits of Early Intervention

While the old saying 'prevention is better than cure' is widely accepted as a truism, in these times where every penny has to be stretched as far as it can go, spending even a small amount now to reduce future costs needs to be justified.

Last year official figures suggest that over 15,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 17 were arrested for drug offences. More than 7,000 were admitted to hospital as a result of their drinking, and 8,770 were excluded from school for drug and alcohol issues.

Estimates for the Ministry of Justice have recently pointed out that the costs associated with a single problematic drug user come in at between £820,000 and £850,000. The same study suggests that if we can stop that person taking drugs before the age of 21 we save over

£700,000. The societal costs of alcohol misuse are similarly mindboggling, with the cost to the NHS alone estimated at £2.7 billion a year.

Street Talk is finding ways to work with vulnerable young people well before the point where they have irreversible problems. By reaching them at a point where, with a relatively small intervention, they are more likely take positive decisions about their substance misuse, we are convinced that we will see substantial benefits for them and the communities they live in.

Bournemouth

On our travels around the Street Talk projects we visited Bournemouth, a place that suffers from 'end of the line syndrome' numerous young people try to run away from their problems and end up here.

One particular group that are attracted to the area is the LGBTQ community. Bournemouth has the fifth biggest LGBTQ community in the UK; and our local partner, Space, has a mission to provide a space for young LGBTQ people to be themselves.

Space offers a wide range of holistic support and guidance and provides a safe place for young people to turn.

Helen the manager of the service, says that young LGBTQ people are more likely to self harm, more likely to have problems with substance misuse and depression, which is why it's vital to have guidance and support on offer. She wants Space to be an escape route, rather than alcohol and drugs.

Speaking about Street Talk she says, "The project has enabled us to build on our current work and give a real focus on alcohol and substance misuse by young people."



Space offers a wide range of holistic support and guidance



Using an App to Collect Data

One of the critical issues for projects that want to show they are making a real and tangible difference in young people's lives is finding ways to collect information in consistent ways.

We were aware that when working with young people doing a brief intervention it was really important that our data collection was interesting enough to keep them with us when there could be other (more interesting) things to be doing.

It was also important to us that those working with the young people saw the collection of these responses as an important part of their role, and that it was simple to achieve.

We also knew that vulnerable young people have been shown to be more likely to provide feedback through computers than using paper questionnaires, and our own observation has been that mobile applications are very attractive to this age group.



Working closely with our external evaluators and Dr Sean Radford from Tacola – a company that specialises in remote handling of sensitive information – we have designed an application that will help us understand whether the brief interventions we carry out with young people are helping them to want to change their own behaviour.

This will be followed up with an online questionnaire two weeks after the intervention where we can explore in more depth what short term impact our conversation and motivational interviewing is having on their thinking and behaviour.

We are pleased to say our early experience is that the application is something that both the young person and our local partners can and are using to help us measure the impact of Street Talk.

For more information and news on projects

Visit

www.street-talk-choices.co.uk



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