Youth Development Project of the Diocese of London

T18 – Detached and outreach guidance

Introduction

Detached and outreach youth work teams aim to reach out and make contact with young people who may have little access to provision in their local areas or who choose not to use such provision. The aim of the work is to enable young people to develop their full potential as individuals and as members of groups and communities.

Definitions

Outreach work is part of most youth workers’ jobs. Most paid staff work in buildings but also have an area brief. Many workers do some outreach in the community to encourage young people to take part in the groups and activities taking place in the centres, and to use the services on offer.

Detached work differs from outreach work in that workers and young people recognise that coming in to a centre may not be immediately appropriate so they choose to build relationships and plan work outside in the community.

Objectives of detached and outreach work

1. To meet young people where they are and develop new and improved communication channels with them
2. To establish relationships and encourage them to participate and make safe decisions and choices for themselves

3. To provide and encourage access to a range of provision

4. To inform and encourage young people to participate in the use of existing services and support.

5. To provide accessible and relevant information

6. To raise young people's awareness of the effect they have on the community and their rights and responsibilities as members of the community

7. To gain a comprehensive and in depth understanding of the local community.

Resources

- All workers undertaking outreach or detached work should attend suitable training prior to beginning the work to ensure they have the necessary skills and understanding to do the work.
- All workers should undertake lone working safety training.
- A suitable vehicle should be available for the outreach/detached work.

Workers should take out the following:

- Petty cash
- Identity card
- Torch
- Leaflets
- Recording forms, pens and paper
- Emergency and essential phone numbers
Mobile phones

**Before starting the work**

- Do a full reconnaissance of the areas you will be working in. Contact shop owners, post offices, publicans, churches, schools, residents. Let them know who you are and what you're are doing.

- Find out if any other agencies do outreach/detached work in the same patch and which nights they go out (don’t duplicate work and go out on the same evenings).

- Contact the local police, inform them of what you plan to do and when.

- Conduct a thorough risk assessment of the area and the work you plan to do.

- Agree what you will do in an emergency and have a plan of action.

- Make sure you leave a forecast sheet at the office/with a line manager before every session stating the dates, times and places you intend to cover at each session.

**Good practice guidelines**

- Never work alone – always work in pairs and always stay in view of each other. Agree the boundaries and practice before you go out.

- Don’t take handbags, wallets, expensive jewellery or clothing out whilst working.

- Wear your ID cards and make sure they are visible.

- Wear practical clothing suitable for the weather conditions you are working in.
• Carry a fully charged mobile phone with emergency contact numbers inputted

• Meet before and after the session to plan and de-brief the work

• Do not work in an area unless previously agreed with supervisor

• Act within the law; withdraw at once if you suspect something illegal is taking place or is about to take place

• Always ensure that you approach individuals in a manner whereby they are able to see or hear you

• Know your limitations. Refer contacts to other agencies when appropriate, or when they require help outside your expertise/ responsibilities

• Respect confidentiality between different groups of young people

• Don't work with young people who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, but make an agreement to meet at another time

• If for any reason you feel unsafe or unsure at anytime, leave immediately

• Phone supervisor when leaving an area and returning home

• As with all forms of good practice in youth work, detached work depends on good planning and evaluation strategies
• Young people should also be asked to evaluate and review detached work by appropriate methods

Organisations specialising in detached work:

http://www.streetspace.org.uk/Streetspace/Home.html