

Case study

A multi-agency approach to working with young people....



Wakefield Youth Development & Support Service

The Wakefield District Youth Development and Support Service (YDSS) is the new combined service for young people. It falls within Family Services and is made up of Wakefield Young People's Service, Connexions and the Youth Offending Team. The Wakefield area has been split to form three 'hubs' - Wakefield, Pontefract and Hemsworth - and a multi-agency approach is being utilised to coordinate opportunities. A key remit of the service is around crime prevention and they work with a lot of 'non-sporty' young people.

The first football session started at the beginning of May in Wakefield and around 15 young people have been attending. Minsthorpe and Hemsworth have more recently started a football session connected to the youth club on Thursday evenings - this session attracted 35 boys and girls on its first night. Young people have been invited to attend the sessions by youth workers who have been out on the streets doing outreach work. Many local youngsters feel intimidated by the 'youth club' environment which is sometimes dominated by older people and potential fears over bullying. The youth workers have been able to spread the word that the session is open to anyone and that there will be coaches and staff present to ensure a safe and non-threatening environment. The difference with the YDSS approach has been specific targeting of 'semi-sporty' young people via outreach work who often don't engage with traditional football provision and the strong links between sport and social opportunities that has been provided.

"If this approach works it will be fantastic as young people who are 'at risk' will have more opportunities to take part in activities that are tailored to their needs"

On the basis of local consultation several more sessions are in the pipeline. These include roller skating and possibly the use of Nintendo Wii games consoles, offering a programme which combines Wii boxing followed by a course of 'try it for real' boxing sessions with opportunities for progression.



► The key to success has been combining sport with social opportunities.