



## Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Streetwise

This report will highlight and identify opportunities that exist for young people to engage in dialogue within Streetwise in order to make changes to the service.

Streetwise is a free confidential advice and support service for young people under 25 based within Newcastle City Centre.

The project operates both drop-in sessions and young people clinics everyday other than a Wednesday. After requests from the young people, the times of sessions have been extended with a later session on a Thursday evening. There is also an under 18 session on a Saturday morning.

Streetwise provides a range of diverse but complementary services. The project focuses on three particular areas: sexual health, drug and alcohol misuse and mental health. Project workers provide information and advice on any issue relevant to young people. As well as this Streetwise provides a free confidential counselling service.

**Evidence of dialogue and change** is taken from discussions I had with young people who access Streetwise. For the purpose of this report I had the pleasure of meeting with the young people from the Crunkers.

The youth workers received a lot of comments from young people in relation to changing the times of the sessions. The project has now moved the sessions to the times suggested by the young people and as a result the numbers of young people accessing this session has increased.

The waiting room at Streetwise has been an issue of debate between young people and workers. Young people requested that the waiting room was redecorated, **“we suggested a few things and we got them, we now have nicer seats and more of them, drinks, a bigger waiting room.”** The inside of the building is currently being transformed after requests from young people to insure higher levels of privacy and confidentiality in terms of S.T.I testing and speaking with project workers or the nurse. **“Its good that they listened to us, we now have more private waiting rooms. I was nervous what people would think about me coming here”**

Another change that has been implemented this year as a direct response from complaints made from young people is the monitoring system. The young people were not happy that every time they accessed Streetwise they had to fill forms in. Workers responded to this and altered the system. The young people now only need to complete one form on their first visits **“it’s much easier, it took ages before but now I just come in and they have my details”**.

Streetwise is offering support to young people who are wishing to take a Chlamydia test. Young people can take the test in the project and fill in the paper work with the workers. The project then sends it away for testing and offers advice and support to the young

people when the results come back.” **We suggested that we can have tests here instead of going to the GUM, its much better we can come here whenever we want, it’s good because we know it and the workers care.”**

### Crunkerz

The Crunk Group is made up of young people from across the North East, who are interested in planning and organising under 18 Hip Hop events. New members have joined the group as a direct result from events that have already taken place.

The group meet regularly on a Monday evening. The session is focused around young people engaging in dialogue with workers and implementing change to the planning and organisation of each event. The group have a number of different areas that they are working on including: funding, event planning and planning the Crunk CD. The young people decided to split the group into Sub Groups to work on the different project areas.

The group also wanted to have a regular city centre venue for the monthly hip hop night. They have used numerous venues throughout the city and after great deal of debate with the project staff, the young people have found themselves a regular venue at Legends.

**“We are in charge of everything to do with Crunk we plan the club event, security, DJ’s, themes, workers roles and finance stuff. We needed to raise money so we Designed t-shirts, hats and hoodies with Crunkers logo on to sell at the events to generate funds to put back into the project.”**

Crunk has now been running for a number of years and some of the older members have shown an interest in volunteering and supporting other young people. **“We are helping the younger ones take over the Crunk, we support them with it.”**

### Counselling Service

The counselling service has recently added more appointment times after school hours as young people told the workers that they wanted to access the service at a time that suited them. These appointments are now up and running and are proving to be a success and utilised by young people.

Youth workers also found that young people from the east end of the city were not accessing the service. After discussing there concerns with young people from the east, the young people informed them that it was not easy for them to get into the city centre as transport links were not very good. Due to this dialogue the Counselling team have begun to provide an outreach service in Walker Technology College.

Streetwise has been approached by Safer Stronger Communities Fund North East to work alongside young people in the outer west area of Newcastle to discuss their experience and views of public transport and to get their ideas of what they would need to feel safe. This work is currently taking place in Lemmington School.

### Are you ready?

Are you ready? is a project that was run by year 11 pupils from Walker Technology College, Heaton Manor and young people accessing streetwise. Workers asked young

people what issue was important to them in relation to sex and relationships. The response was to look at the Are You Ready? project as many of the young people who discussed the issue with workers highlighted a high level of regret to their first sexual experience. The young people involved designed the advertising posters, pens, c-card holders and leaflets that have been distributed across the city.

Streetwise has recently completed research into young people's sexual expectations and experiences. The results from this piece of work are being used to develop resources within the service.

Over 100 young people took part in research about sex, risk taking and sex education. 12 young people attend a focus group to talk about how young people wanted to learn about sex relationships. **“What we said has been listened to by the workers and they are changing the way we get info about sex and relationships, we wanted more mags and they have got them in the drop in now.”**

It is evident that Streetwise are committed to including young people in dialogue in order to alter the service they provide to best suit the young people. Streetwise are imaginative in the way that they gather the views of young people and how they involve them in service development due to confidentiality issues within the project. It is clear that they successfully achieve this and that young people are involved in service feedback and development.

I look forward to hearing of the developments of all the current pieces of work over the next year and how change is implemented as a result.

All the young people I met with were very positive about Streetwise. They feel that they have the opportunity to participate in the direction of project. The young people involved in this report agree with the content and recommendations made. Therefore it is on their behalf that I have no hesitation in recommending that Streetwise remains an Investing in Children member.

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