

Evaluation of Detached Youth Work in Essex

Project aim and purpose

The VVU have been funding detached youth work since 2020 following feedback from local young people through our Listening Projects. Young people identified that more trusted adults, more opportunities to engage in activities, and more safe spaces to socialise in would help them feel safer in their local communities. An evidence based approach – YEF assess ‘social skills training’ as having a high impact on serious youth violence, and stress the importance of trusted adults in supporting young people to navigate challenges.

There are seven organisations around Essex delivering detached youth work in their areas of need. Predominantly at night, in parks, on streets and anywhere else young people hang out.

Who the project is aimed at

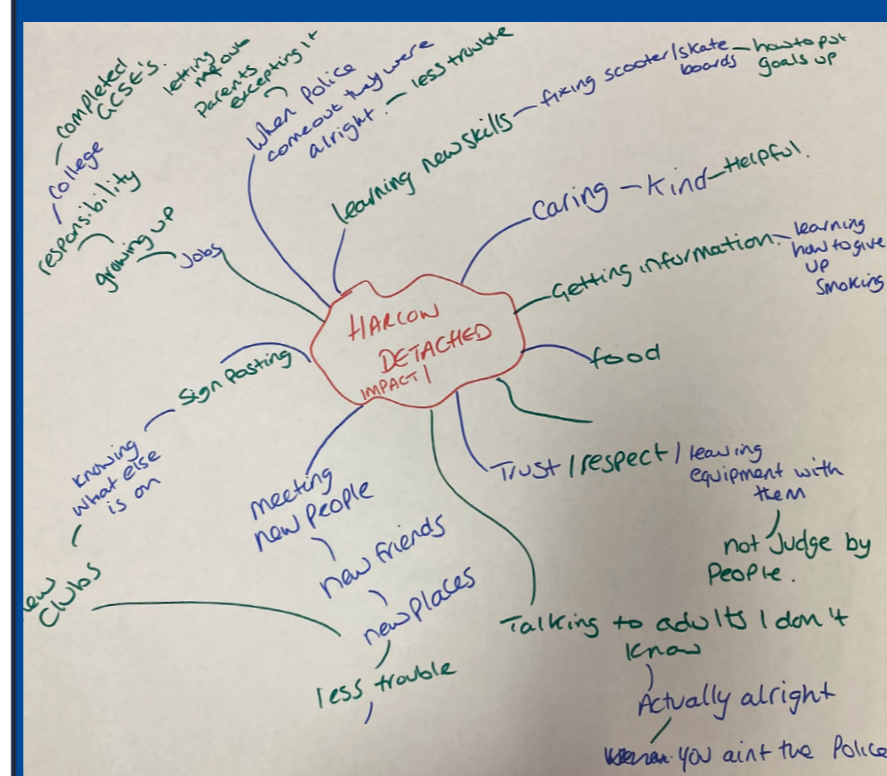


10-14
Year olds

“ The nature of Detached Youth Work means the magic is in the informality, the trust between the young people and the youth workers and in them understanding the local people and places. ” Detached youth worker

Methodology

In addition to the usual practitioner interviews, in order to really understand the complexities and detail of interactions, it was necessary to use innovative methodologies.



Ripple Effect Mapping techniques were used with youth workers, who were then trained to do the same with the young people on the project.

“ Helped with arguments in school, biggest impact. Before we would fight. Detached Youth Work has helped me not explode in school. Without them I would have been excluded for sure, been in trouble at home. ” Young person

Programme in numbers

Between September 2020 and January 2024 the programme reached the following milestones:



1,428
Total sessions



18,033
Recorded contacts

Outcomes and benefits

The development of trust between the young people and the youth workers is key to the success of this programme. The detached youth workers go to the places young people hang out and feel comfortable, and are there week in, week out to build up the trust and the familiarity. This consistency allows relationships to build and young people to access the support they need.

“ You keep coming back. Us going back there and being where we say we’re going to be is massive. ” Detached youth worker

Trust in the detached youth workers was the primary outcome which led to many secondary outcomes, including the willingness to engage with other services, improved engagement with positive activities and less anti-social behaviour. Positive changes include improved attainment and greater education and employment outcome. This influenced improvements and support within schools, and young people receiving a range of help, such as CV writing and job searching.

